



MARONITE EPARCHY OF AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND OCEANIA

Version II – October 2023

# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

## Context

This policy provides guidance to all members of The Maronite Eparchy of Australia New Zealand and Oceania (the Maronite Eparchy) and personnel on how to receive, record, manage, resolve and report on complaints of abuse or misconduct towards children and vulnerable adults in relation to Maronite Eparchy members, staff or volunteers.

This complaint handling procedure is available on the Maronite Eparchy Website.

This procedure is to be read in the context of the Eparchy Safeguarding Policy and the section on: **Part XIII Reporting**. The principles and policies around disclosure and suspicions of abuse to children are contained in that section.

The Maronite Eparchy seeks to build a culture in which barriers to disclosure by children, vulnerable persons, and barriers for adults recognising and responding to disclosures are identified and overcome (see Appendix C).

There are particular barriers to cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and other children of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and children with disabilities which need to be overcome (see Appendix C).

The Vatican requirements for reporting set out in the Apostolic letter *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* are given in Appendix G.

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## Complaint

A 'complaint' includes disclosures made to the Maronite Eparchy that may be about, or relate to, child and/or vulnerable adult abuse by the Maronite Eparchy members, staff or volunteers. It also includes any allegation, suspicion, concern or report of a breach of the Eparchy Code of Conduct.

A complaint can be made by anyone – including a child, vulnerable person, adult survivor, parent, trusted adult, independent support person, staff member, volunteer or community member. A complaint may be made about an adult allegedly perpetrating child abuse or about a child exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours. A complaint may relate to an incident that has occurred recently or about an event that may have taken place many years or decades before. Complaints may come directly or indirectly.

If a disclosure is made to the Maronite Eparchy member in regard to abusive behaviour or misconduct in relation to someone other than the Maronite Eparchy members, staff or volunteers within a particular ministry under the jurisdiction of partner entity the Eparchy member should follow the protocols of the particular ministry within which the disclosure was made.

If a disclosure is made to a Maronite Eparchy member in regard to abusive behaviour or misconduct in relation to someone other than the Eparchy members, staff or volunteers within the context of a parish for which the Maronite Eparchy is responsible, the Maronite Eparchy member should follow the protocols of the Eparchy.

## Obligation to Report

Regardless of any statutory requirement (that is, the legal obligation imposed on persons who are "mandated to report"), all Maronite Eparchy members and personnel are obliged to report any belief or perception of inappropriate or abusive behaviour, to the Vicar General, and/or Safeguarding Coordinator. If in doubt they should seek advice from the Maronite Chancery.

When there is evidence that a child or vulnerable person is in *immediate danger*, police and the relevant protection agency must be contacted without delay. The safety of children and vulnerable persons is paramount. An allegation of criminal behaviour against a child or vulnerable persons will be reported to Police for investigation.

Any Maronite Eparchy member, staff or volunteer who on reasonable grounds believes a child or vulnerable person is in need of protection should report their concerns to:

- a) The police in matters appearing to be of a criminal nature



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- b) the relevant State or Territory Child/Vulnerable Person Protection Agency for matters requiring mandatory reporting
- c) Reportable conduct authority in the relevant States and Territories. (see Appendix A for details on Child/Vulnerable Person Protection Agencies). This concerns any reasonable belief of abuse, wherever it may have occurred and whoever the suspected perpetrator may be (see how to handle a disclosure Appendix D).

If a report is made to police in relation to allegation against a member/volunteer or staff of the Maronite Eparchy, then the Vicar General and Safeguarding Coordinator should be immediately notified.

If it is an allegation against the clergy and/or a member of the Professional Standards Unit (PSU: Appendix I), then another member of the PSU who is not a party to the allegation should be notified.

### Steps to take when receiving a complaint

- When a complaint of abuse or misconduct towards a child/vulnerable person is made to a Maronite Eparchy member or staff/volunteer the person receiving the complaint must report the matter to the Parish Priest, and the Vicar General, who will confer with the Safeguarding Coordinator and the Professional Standards Unit (PSU: Appendix I) to ascertain the seriousness of the matter
- If the matter is criminal, then it must be immediately reported to the police and to the relevant Child/Vulnerable Person Protection agency. Where the jurisdiction has a reportable conduct scheme the incident, situation or complaint should be reported within the necessary time limits.
- The Professional Standards Unit will offer to connect the complainant and their families with services that can provide them with support to manage difficult or traumatic experiences. The Professional Standards Unit will ensure that children, families and personnel are connected to counsellors, support groups and agencies if they are worried or feeling unsafe.
- After receiving this information, the Safeguarding Coordinator with the Professional Standards Unit will triage issues in consultation with the Vicar General.
- A mutual decision will be made in regard to who does the initial interview of the complainant and accused Maronite Eparchy member and identify any conflict of interest.
- The pastoral care and wellbeing of the complainant/ victim of alleged abuse must be paramount (see Appendix B for support services).

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- Pastoral care should be brought to other affected parties, such as other children, and other personnel who may require support. The alleged offender should also receive adequate support and pastoral care. The Professional Standards Unit (PSU) will assist the Safeguarding Coordinator in bringing this pastoral care to all who are affected. This may involve working with the Parish Priest in the location from where the alleged incident occurred.
- In the case where a criminal or serious allegation against a Maronite Eparchy member, staff or volunteer is made, the Vicar General and Safeguarding Coordinator assisted by the PSU must risk assess the respondent's current involvement with children or young people or vulnerable person and take the appropriate initial risk management action.
- In the case of an allegation of child sexual abuse, if the complaint is plausible, and there is a risk that the respondent may come into contact with children, Vulnerable Person, the respondent is to be stood down from their role and/or ministry while the complaint is investigated. Where Police or the Child Protection Department are involved, the Vicar General or Safeguarding Coordinator must discuss their intention to suspend the respondent from ministry with the relevant statutory agency prior to taking this action in order to prevent any contamination of their investigation.
- The investigation must not presume guilt on the part of the alleged offender until this is admitted and/or proven.
- The Safeguarding Coordinator or his delegate on the PSU will give feedback as soon as possible to children, families, carers and personnel who raise concerns or complaints as to the progress of their complaints and any investigations and outcomes.
- As pastoral care of the complainant is paramount, adult or vulnerable persons complainants should be offered an opportunity to meet with the Vicar General in person (in a location of their choice and together with a support person). The Vicar General, in consultation with the complainant, and working with the PSU, must ensure the unique pastoral needs of the complainant are met. He will facilitate access to trained personnel who are able to listen to and represent the pastoral needs of the complainant.

### Investigating the complaint

An allegation of criminal behaviour against a child or vulnerable person will be reported to Police for investigation. The Vicar General will request advice of police and/or child protection agencies in relation to the next steps to be taken. However, the Vicar General maintains responsibility for risk assessment and management of potential risk of children who may be in contact with the respondent.

Where the complaint is not of a criminal or mandatory reporting nature the Safeguarding Coordinator /Vicar

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General will gather statements around a complaint-where possible in writing.

The Vicar General will consult with the Safeguarding Coordinator and Professional Standards Unit to consider the allegations and advise on the best way to investigate and process the matter.

If the particular jurisdiction where the incident occurred has a Reportable Conduct Scheme in place the Vicar General and Safeguarding Coordinator will abide by the requirements of the scheme.

The complaints will be investigated to determine:

- whether a person has breached the Maronite Eparchy Code of Conduct or another policy or procedure;
- whether they pose a risk to safety of children; and
- what action, if any, is required to prevent harm to children.

The investigation will be carried out by an impartial, objective and trained investigator who will advise on the investigation plan.

The investigation should be undertaken in a way that is proportionate to the seriousness of the allegation, frequency of occurrence of alleged incidents and severity of the complaint.

### Procedural fairness

It is important that during all stages of a complaints process, the respondent is treated fairly and afforded procedural fairness and presumed innocent (unless the complaint is substantiated). This includes:

- assistance being offered by way of counselling, union referrals (where appropriate), and a support person;
- all allegations/complaints that are put to the respondent give sufficient detail and are accurate to enable an adequate response (these must be in writing);
- clear information is provided about the investigative process and potential findings;
- regular contact providing information as to the progress of the investigation;
- outcomes/findings provided in writing; and
- the right to a review.

### Objectivity and fairness

All complaints must be addressed objectively, fairly and impartially. All conflicts of interest must be declared and resolved. Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest should be referred to and handled by

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the PSU. Procedural fairness must be observed in relation to all parties.  
Complainants must be protected from victimisation or harassment.

### **Ensure appropriate confidentiality**

Care should be taken to observe privacy legislation and confidentiality and only to inform involved parties in accordance with relevant “information sharing” legislation. Information should not be shared otherwise. This includes social media and other media.

In the case of criminal investigations, advice should be sought from the police before sharing any information so as not to compromise an investigation.

### **Adult Complainant and historical abuse**

In the event of an adult bringing forward a complaint suffered as a child or vulnerable person by a member, staff or volunteer of the Maronite Eparchy, the wellbeing of the complainant is paramount. While the confidentiality of the complainant and the way they want to proceed with the complaint is a high priority, they ought to be assisted and supported to make their complaint to the police if their complaint appears to involve a criminal offence.

If it is a mandatory or reportable conduct matter, the steps for processing any complaint outlined herein will be followed.

Where the matter is not of a mandatory or reportable conduct nature, it would be assessed initially by the PSU to advise on the best process for the complainant. The PSU will listen to the complainant’s wishes about the process and consider what is in the best interests of the adult complainant and advise the Moderator. The PSU will facilitate a suitable process for adult complainants.

### **Conduct risk assessments**

A Risk assessment will be conducted:

- 1) once an allegation has been made, (see above: *Steps to be taken when receiving a complaint*)
- 2) during the investigation and;
- 3) at the end of the investigation.

A final decision can then be made regarding what action, if any, needs to be taken regarding the respondent to address any risk to:

- the child(ren)/ vulnerable person;

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- other children with whom the respondent may have contact;
- the respondent; and
- the proper investigation of the complaint.

### **Disciplinary Action while Investigation is in process**

Action will depend on:

- the nature and seriousness of the complaint;
- Any special and diverse needs and or disabilities of the children the respondent would be working with or providing services to;
- the nature of the position held by the respondent (e.g. the position is one of authority; the position requires one-to-one interaction);
- the level of oversight and/ or professional supervision available to the respondent;
- the availability of support for the respondent on a day-to-day basis if their duties are unchanged
- the respondent's disciplinary history; and
- possible risks to the investigation

These factors will determine the appropriate action toward the respondent while the investigation is in process. At completion of the initial risk assessment where a complaint of child/vulnerable person sexual abuse is plausible, and there is a risk that the person may come into contact with children and/or vulnerable person, the person must be stood down from their role and/or ministry while the complaint is being investigated. If after the initial risk assessment a breach of the Code of Conduct in relation to inappropriate behaviour towards a child is being investigated and managed, the appropriate action may include the person being redeployed, stood down and/ or dismissed.

### **Dismissal of seminarian, priest or religious, staff and volunteers**

Where a complaint related to child sexual abuse made against a seminarian, priest or religious is substantiated on the balance of probabilities the individual must be removed from ministry.

A seminarian, priest or brother convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse will be permanently removed from ministry and will not hold himself out as a religious.

The Vicar General will follow the canonical process for dismissal of the cleric and dispensation from religious vows as stipulated under Canon Law.

If a staff member or volunteer is convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse, the person should be

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dismissed from work or duty.

### **Communication**

Before and during the investigation it will be necessary to communicate regularly with all parties affected by the complaint.

### **Implementing outcomes**

After the investigation has been completed, the Vicar General should:

- decide the outcome of the complaint;
- advise the victim and/or complainant of the outcome;
- advise the respondent of the outcome;
- provide ongoing support, including, access to advocacy, support and therapeutic treatment services, and a safety plan for the complainant and family;
- inform relevant agencies as required (e.g. the Ombudsman or working with children check authorities); and
- advise those in the community affected by the conduct.

### **Right of review**

Where there is dissatisfaction with the outcome the Vicar General and PSU will determine the appropriate process of review and make known these avenues of review to every complainant and every respondent.

### **Record-keeping practices**

All child/vulnerable person safety complaints will be documented regardless of whether the complaint meets statutory reporting thresholds. Documenting includes notes regarding actions taken, including all internal investigations and reports made to statutory authorities or professional bodies.

The record-keeping practices are in accordance with the law. Hard copies of incidents and complaints will be filed and stored securely at the Maronite Chancery, Level 2, 46 Alice Street Harris Park NSW 2150 (see The Maronite Eparchy Record keeping policy).

### **Review of Complaints Procedure**

The Maronite Eparchy will review the Policy regularly to determine whether any modifications may be necessary to improve the safeguarding of Children and/or vulnerable persons. It will consider the opinions

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of Children and vulnerable persons in refining and developing this Policy and its Child safeguarding materials.

Any revisions to the Policy will be made available on the Maronite Eparchy's website.

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## Appendix A

### Contact details for each state and territory

The tables below include the contact details of the reporting authority in each Australian state and territory:

- [Australian Capital Territory](#)
- [New South Wales](#)
- [Northern Territory](#)
- [Queensland](#)
- [South Australia](#)
- [Tasmania](#)
- [Victoria](#)
- [Western Australia](#)

Please note that **you do not need to be absolutely certain** that there has been abuse or neglect of a child or young person or vulnerable person to contact these authorities. If you suspect a child or vulnerable person is at risk of harm, you should call the authority to discuss your concerns, and they will decide whether an investigation is required.

In each state and territory, **all serious concerns should be reported by phone** rather than online or via email. Serious concerns include when you suspect a child or young person or vulnerable person is in imminent or immediate danger of serious harm, serious injury or chronic neglect.

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### Australian Capital Territory

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
<a href="#">Child and Youth Protection Services</a>	<p><a href="#">Child and Youth Protection Services</a> is responsible for facilitating coordination across government for the care and protection of children and young people in the Australian Capital Territory.</p> <p>If you are concerned about a child and want further information on mandatory reporting, refer to <a href="#">Keeping Children and Young People Safe</a></p>	<p>Phone: General public Ph: 1300 556 729 (24hours)</p> <p>Mandated reporters Ph: 1300 556 728 (24 hours)</p> <p><b>Online:</b> For less serious concerns, complete an online child concern report.</p> <p><b>Email:</b> For less serious concerns, contact Child Protection Reports.</p>

### New South Wales

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
<a href="#">Department of Family and Community Services</a>	<p>The Department of Family and Community Services is responsible for handling reports of child abuse and neglect in New South Wales. Information about the process of reporting child welfare concerns can be found on the department's <a href="#">Reporting a Child at Risk</a> webpage.</p>	<p>Phone: Child Protection Helpline Ph: 13 21 11 (24 hours) (TTY/voice)</p>

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### Northern Territory

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
<b>Territory Families</b>	<p>In the Northern Territory, every person is required to report suspected child abuse and neglect.</p> <p>For further information about the process of reporting concerns about a child's welfare in the Northern Territory, refer to the <a href="#">Report Child Abuse</a> page of the department's website.</p>	<p>Phone: Child Abuse Hotline Ph: 1800 700 250 (24 hours)</p>

### New South Wales

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
	<p>For information about mandatory reporting, refer to the <a href="#">Mandatory reporters</a> webpage.</p>	<p>calls: 133 677; Speak &amp; Listen: 1300 555 727; SMS: 0423 677 767)</p> <p>Online: Mandatory reporters with less serious concerns can use <a href="#">eReporting</a>.</p>

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### Queensland

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
<a href="#">Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women</a>	Phone: For a list of contact numbers during business hours, go to: <a href="#">Regional Intake Services</a> .	Child Safety After Hours Service Centre Ph: 1800 177 135 or (07) 3235 9999.

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### South Australia

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
<a href="#">Department for Child Protection</a>	<p>The Department for Child Protection works to keep South Australia's children safe by protecting them from abuse and neglect.</p> <p>For information about the process of reporting concerns about a child's welfare in South Australia, refer to the department's <a href="#">Report Child Abuse</a> webpage.</p> <p>The Department for Child Protection provides additional information for mandatory reporting, including <a href="#">Mandated Notifiers and Their Role</a> and <a href="#">Preparing to Report Child Abuse</a>.</p>	<p>Phone: Child Abuse Report Line Ph: 13 14 78 (24 hours)</p> <p>Online:</p> <p>Less serious concerns can also be <a href="#">reported online</a>.</p>

### Tasmania

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
<a href="#">Department of Health and Human Services</a>	<p>The role of the Child Safety Service is to protect children and young people who are at risk of abuse and neglect in Tasmania.</p> <p>For information about the process of reporting concerns about a child's welfare in Tasmania, refer to the department's <a href="#">Child Safety Service</a> webpage.</p>	<p>Phone: Child Safety Service 1800 000 123 (24hours)</p>

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### Tasmania

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
	Information about mandatory reporting and making a notification can be found on the department's <a href="#">Child safety notifications</a> webpage.	Online: Mandatory reporters with less serious concerns can <a href="#">report online</a> .

### Victoria

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
<a href="#">Department of Health and Human Services</a>	<p>The Child Protection Service is specifically targeted to those children and young people at risk of significant harm in Victoria.</p> <p>For information about child protection and mandatory reporting requirements in Victoria, refer to the department's <a href="#">Child Protection</a> webpage.</p>	<p>Phone: For a list of regional and metropolitan phone numbers: <a href="#">Child Protection Contacts</a></p> <p>After hours child protection emergency service Ph: 13 12 78</p>

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### Western Australia

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
<a href="#">Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support</a>	The Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support offers a range of services to support children and families in Western Australia.	Phone: Central Intake Team Ph: 1800 273 889
	For further information about the process of reporting concerns about a child's welfare, refer to the department's <a href="#">If You are Concerned About a Child</a> webpage.  Information about mandatory reporting in Western Australia can be found on the department's <a href="#">mandatory reporting information</a> webpage.	After hours Ph: (08) 9223 1111 or Country Freecall: 1800 199 008  Online: Mandatory reporters with less serious concerns can use the department's secure <a href="#">Mandatory Reporting Web System</a>

## References

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). (2018). Child protection Australia 2016–2017 (Vol. cat. no. CWS 63). Canberra: AIHW.

Child Family Community Australia (CFCA). (2018). What is child abuse and neglect? (CFCA Resource Sheet). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies. Retrieved from [aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/what-child-abuse-and-neglect](http://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/what-child-abuse-and-neglect).

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## Appendix B

***If you believe that a child or vulnerable person is in imminent danger or in need of medical assistance, call Police or Ambulance services on 000.***

If you are feeling distressed, are worried about someone or would like someone to talk to, you can contact:

- Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800 or [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)
- Headspace on 1800 650 890 or [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)
- Lifeline Australia on 13 11 14 or [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)
- Bravehearts counselling and support for survivors of child sexual abuse on 1800 272 831 or [www.bravehearts.org.au](http://www.bravehearts.org.au)
- Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN) on 1800 008 774 or [www.clan.org.au](http://www.clan.org.au)
- PartnerSPEAK (peer support for non-offending partners and families of perpetrators of child sexual abuse) on 03 9018 7872 or [www.partnerspeak.org.au](http://www.partnerspeak.org.au)
- 1800 RESPECT national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service on 1800 737 732 or [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)
- MensLine Australia on 1300 78 99 78 or [www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)
- Men's Referral Service on 1300 766 491 or [www.ntv.org.au](http://www.ntv.org.au)
- Relationships Australia on 1300 364 277 or [www.relationships.org.au](http://www.relationships.org.au)

For information about relevant support services and other resources, you can contact:

- Healing Foundation on 02 6272 7500 or [www.healingfoundation.org.au](http://www.healingfoundation.org.au)
- People With Disability Australia on 1800 422 015 or [www.pwd.org.au](http://www.pwd.org.au)
- Children and Young People with Disability Australia on 1800 222 660 or [www.cyda.org.au](http://www.cyda.org.au)

For additional helplines and counselling services for children, young people, vulnerable persons and parents, Australia-wide and by state and territory, see the online resource sheet developed by the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

For additional counselling and support services for parents, see the online Parentline counselling services in each state and territory.

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## Appendix C

### OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO DISCLOSURE

#### SOME BARRIERS TO CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS MAKING DISCLOSURES

- Fear of not being believed; anticipate being dismissed
- Afraid that they will get into trouble
- Lack of opportunity which never seemed to present itself
- Relationship with the perpetrator – considered a friend
- Revere of perpetrator as an instrument of God
- Fear of getting perpetrator into trouble
- Promise to offender they will not tell
- Self-blame and shame about what has happened
- Wanting to protect a family member
- Not wanting to upset equilibrium of the family
- Mistrust of adults and professionals

#### SOME BARRIERS FOR ADULTS RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES

- Misguided loyalty amongst adults in an institution
- A high degree of trust including religious affiliation amongst adults leading to disbelief of disclosure
- An unwillingness to take a child's word seriously; refusal to listen
- A culture that prioritises institutional reputation over care and safety of children
- The status afforded religious leaders who are considered not capable of such an offence
- A lack of formal avenues for children to disclose; no one the child can approach
- A bias that children make up stories and can be overly dramatic about things
- Children dismissed, blamed and not believed, and sometimes punished for attempting to disclose; made to feel responsible themselves
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children not feeling culturally safe; distrust of non- Aboriginal authority

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### HOW TO REDUCE THESE BARRIERS

#### For children

- Develop a culture in which children participate in decision-making
- A culture where children have the right to give their views and opinions and be listened to
- A culture where children feel their views are valued and listened to
- Children will be more likely to make disclosures if they feel safe and empowered
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Is children connected to other ATSI people they trust, their culture and language

#### For Adults

- Not to talk down to children, vulnerable persons and young people, but to treat them with respect
- Not to make assumptions about what children and young people are capable of
- Give children, vulnerable persons and young people time and space to express themselves
- Engage children, vulnerable persons and young people in dialogue about the ten standards
- Not to dismiss any disclosure even when it may seem to threaten adult relationships, or the fabric of a community, or family loyalty
- Be aware of cultural safety in a linguistically or culturally diverse situation. Try to engage a trusted person from the same culture of the child/vulnerable persons or has experience of the child's culture e.g. elder, family member, interpreter or support person
- Willingness to learn, understand and respond to the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and openness to children/vulnerable persons indicating what they find comfortable and safe.

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## Appendix D

### HANDLING DISCLOSURE

**The following are some helpful steps when handling disclosure.**

A disclosure happens when you have reasonable grounds to suspect harm:

- If a child tells you directly that they have been harmed
- If a child tells you indirectly (for example, writing about abuse)
- In journal, drawing pictures of inappropriate touching or playacting abuse scenarios)
- If someone else tells you (for example, another child, parent or colleague) that harm has occurred or is likely to occur
- If a child tells you they know someone who has been harmed
- If you are concerned at significant changes in behaviours of a child, or the presence of new, unexplained and suspicious injuries
- If you see harm happening

**If a child discloses or complains to you about abuse by someone else:**

- Ask another adult to be with you
- Listen to the child and let the child speak freely
- Do not ask questions other than to clarify your understanding. If you must ask a question, make sure it is open-ended (for example, what, when, who, where)
- Explain that you cannot keep it a secret
- Let the child know what you are going to do next, including who you will need to share the information with
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you

**Some helpful responses:**

- Thank you for telling me.
- You were brave to tell.
- Do you want to tell me anything else?
- I will talk to [name] who will know what to do next.

Adapted from Tarrawarra Abbey Child Safety Policy November 2019

The Maronite Eparchy Policy for Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults

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## Appendix E

### COMPLAINTS FORM

Complaint record Reference:

Your Name:

Position:

Complaint assigned to:

How was the complaint received (e.g. phone, email, in person):

*Name of complainant:*

1. Name of child, vulnerable persons or young person involved in the complaint:

2. Name of person making the complaint [if different to above]:

3. Name of the person who the complaint was made about [if applicable]:

#### Contact details:

4. Complainant contact details:

a. Address:

b. Phone number:

c. Email:

\*Preferred contact method: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Details relating to the child or young person:

5. Age:

6. Gender:

7. Do they identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

8. Are they from a culturally and linguistically diverse background? If, yes, specify:

9. Are they in out-of-home care?

10. Do they have a disability? If, yes, provide any relevant details \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do they have communication support needs? If yes:

Was the child, vulnerable persons or young person offered an interpreter, a communication assistant, support person, advocate, family member?

Any other supports?

12. Provide any relevant information relating to the child or vulnerable persons or young person's preferred communication methods, support needs, and involvement in the complaint-handling process:

13. If the complainant has a disability, provide any relevant details relating to their; guardianship, advocacy or other decision-making arrangements;

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### (Complaints Form pg 2)

#### Details relating to the complainant (if made by an adult on behalf of the affected child, vulnerable or young person)

14. Age:

15. Gender:

16. Relationship to the affected child, vulnerable or young person:

17. Do they identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

18. Are they from a culturally and linguistically diverse background?

If yes, specify:

19. Do they have a disability? If, yes, provide any relevant details \_\_\_\_\_

20. Do they have communication support needs? If yes:

Was the complainant offered an interpreter?

Was the complainant offered a communication assistant?

Any other supports?

21. Provide any relevant information relating to the complainant's preferred communication methods, support needs, and involvement in the complaint-handling process:

Nature of the complaint:

22. Complaint description (accurately record the issues, concerns, details of any witnesses, as far as possible in the child's own words):

23. What outcome to the complaint is the complainant seeking?

Immediate risk considerations:

24. Details of any injuries and if the child or others received medical attention:

25. Does the complaint indicate the possibility of criminal conduct? Yes/No/Unsure

26. Is a mandatory child protection report required? Yes/No

27. Does the complaint involve a reportable allegation/incident? Yes/No/Unsure

28. Is any immediate risk management action required? Yes/No

29. Next steps:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Complaint records should be sent to and filed at** the Maronite Chancery, Level 2, 46 Alice Street, Harris Park NSW 2150

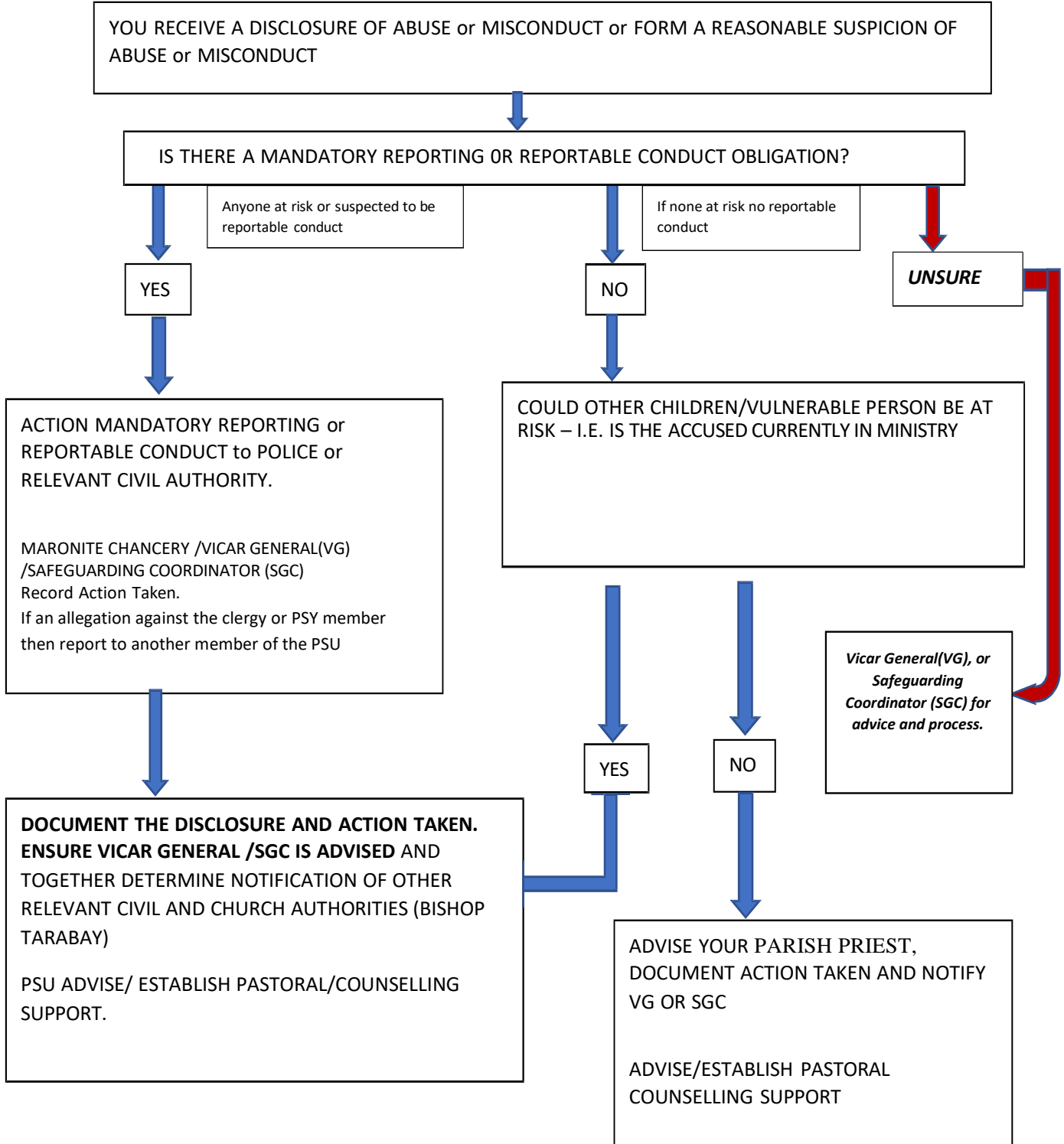
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## Appendix F



## RESPONSE TO AND REPORTING OF DISCLOSURES/ MISCONDUCT

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Drafted 01 May 2023

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## Appendix G

### Vatican Reporting Requirements Apostolic letter *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*.

There is an obligation to report under Church law if an allegation against a cleric or consecrated person involves;

- a) forcing someone, by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts; performing sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person; the production, exhibition, possession or distribution, including by electronic means, of child pornography, as well as by the recruitment of or inducement of a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions; and
- b) conduct consisting of actions or omissions intended to interfere with or avoid civil investigations or canonical investigations, whether administrative or penal, against a cleric or a religious regarding the delicts referred to in the above paragraph (a).

Whenever a member of the Maronite Eparchy has notice of, or well-founded motives to believe that an incident of a sexual nature amounting to abuse has been committed by a cleric or consecrated person, that member is obliged to report promptly the fact to the local Ordinary where the events are said to have occurred or to another Ordinary. (VELM art 3). The Local Ordinary will advise the Vicar General how the complaint is to be processed subject to any advice and investigation by police.

If the complaint is of a criminal nature and the local bishop will be informed of the complaint as stipulated in art 1 of VELM.

An allegation of criminal behaviour against a child will be reported to Police for investigation. The Police will advise in relation to next steps. It will also be reported to the local Bishop insofar it falls within reportable content of article 1(VELM).

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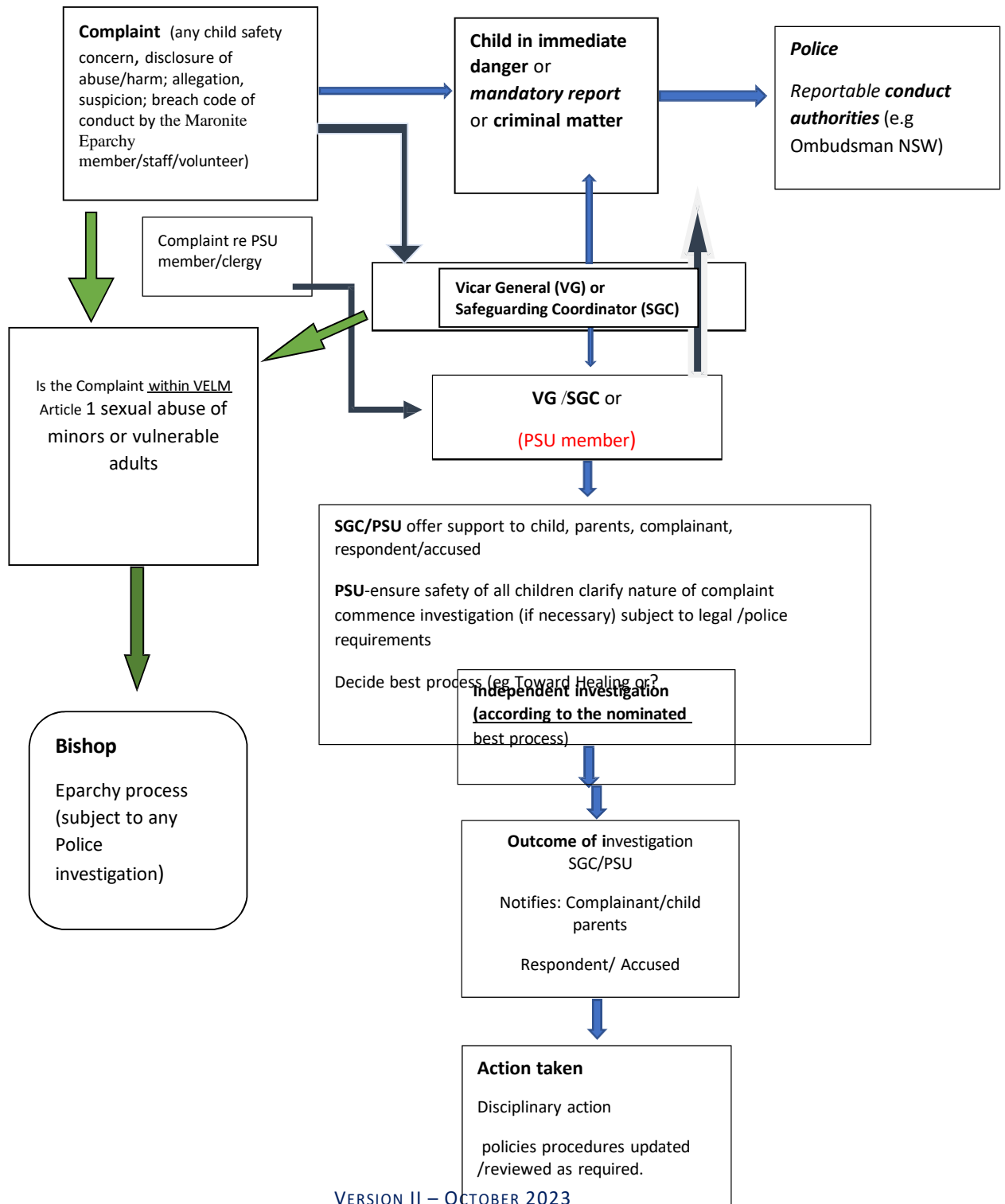
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## Appendix H

### The Maronite Eparchy Child/Vulnerable Person Safeguarding Complaints Procedure Flow Chart



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MARONITE EPARCHY OF AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND OCEANIA

## Appendix I

### THE MARONITE EPARCHY OF AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND AND OCEANIA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT (PSU)

The Maronite Eparchy of Australia New Zealand and Oceania Professional Standards Unit is designed to give adequate advice and support to the Safeguarding Coordinator in the event of a complaint, and/ or allegation made against a member of the Maronite Eparchy, or someone on the staff, or a volunteer.

#### **The Purpose of the Professional Standards Unit**

The purpose of the group is to ensure that the Maronite Eparchy complaints procedure is followed and enacted in a manner which cares for the welfare and safety of the alleged victim and ensures natural justice and charity for the alleged perpetrator.

#### **The Benefits of the Professional Standards**

- A quick and thorough response to complaints
- Expertise and consistency in response
- A proactive, comprehensive and restorative response to victims, both children and vulnerable people
- A sharing of wisdom which helps the Safeguarding Coordinator make an objective assessment of situations that arise

#### **Scope of the Professional Standards Unit**

The PSU will triage any complaint of serious misconduct in relation to children or vulnerable adults. They will triage the complaint and then initiate any appropriate process, ensuring that the complaints handling procedure is followed from the receiving of a complaint to final outcomes and any disciplinary matters.

The group will sometimes need to consult with appropriate experts in civil law and canon law, as well as professionals in psychology and other disciplines

The group will need to be aware of legal obligations, and collaborate and communicate with relevant professional standards offices, Diocesan chancery, agencies and ministries, the Ombudsman, and child protection agencies, as well as the police when necessary.

#### **Membership**

The PSU is comprised of the Vicar General of the Maronite Eparchy, the Safeguarding Coordinator, the Eparchy Secretary General and two other persons who have long professional experience in the field of child protection and investigation.

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## MARONITE EPARCHY OF AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND OCEANIA

Rev Monsignor, Marcelino Youssef, Vicar General (VG)

Rev Deacon, Sayed Issac, Safeguarding Coordinator

Rev Father, Michael Boudaher, Secretary General

Independent child protection investigator & consultant appointed by Safeguarding Australia Ltd

Rev Deacon, Joseph Maatouk, Professional Counsellor

### **Roles and responsibilities during a Complaints process**

#### **Decision-Maker** Vicar General

The decision-maker is kept at an “arms length” distance from the investigative process in order to maintain a sense of independence and avoid any potential conflict of interest

#### **Investigative Officer** Safeguarding Coordinator

The investigative officer coordinates the investigation process. A report is produced for the Vicar General. The PSC will draw upon the expertise of the other members of the PSU, and they may outsource the investigation to another professional group, e.g. if there is a conflict of interest between the investigator and any parties involved.

#### **Complainant Support Person**

This is someone who can be informed of the process which is happening and is best positioned to care for the needs of the person making the complaint. In the case of a child it may be a parent or counsellor. An adult complainant may have their own support person, but it is the responsibility of the PSU to make sure they have one.

#### **Respondent Support Person**

This should be someone close to them and accessible. The person will need to be briefed of the process, but they cannot be informed of the facts or findings coming from the complaint or any investigation. They simply know that the respondent is undergoing a process and they support the respondent through the process.

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