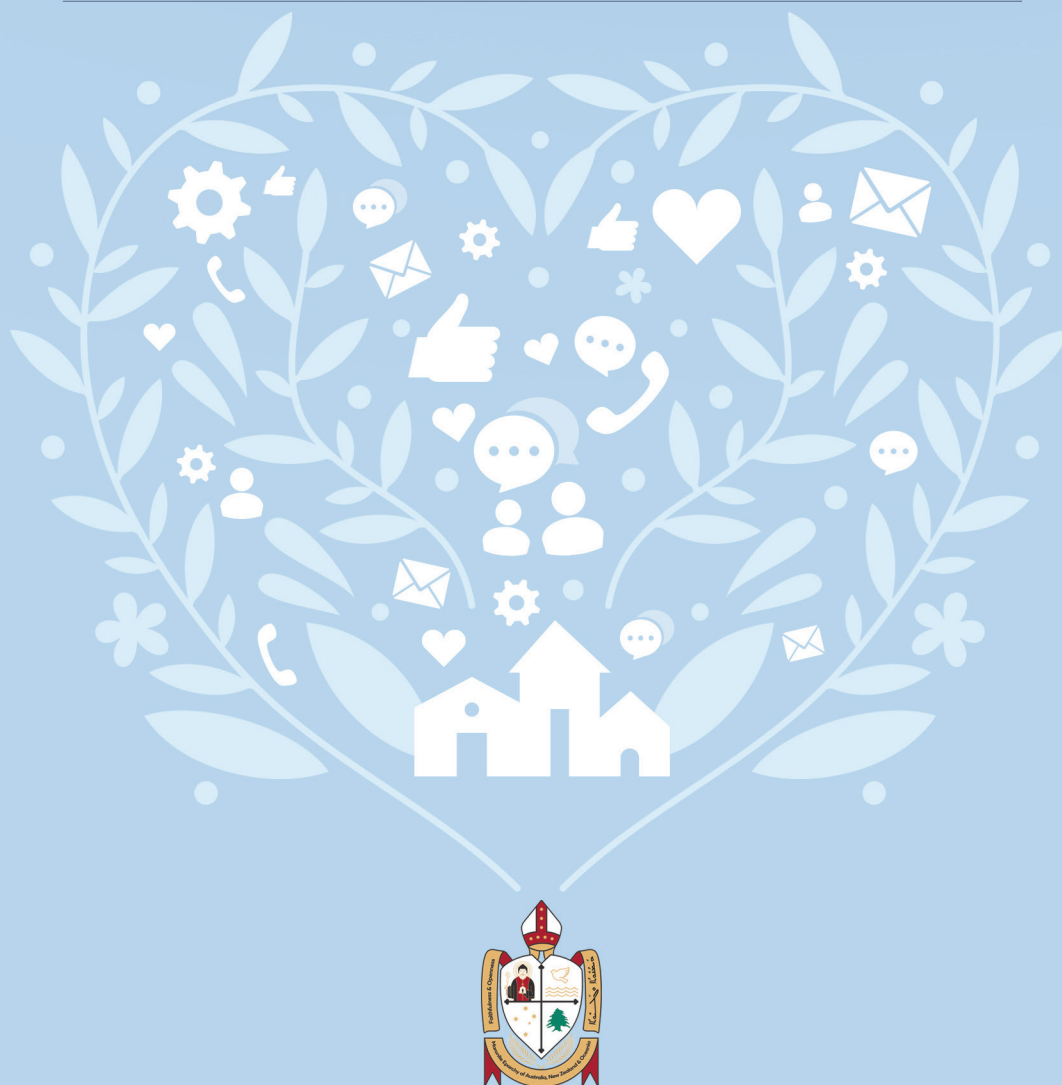


# CHILDREN and YOUNG PEOPLE

## PARTICIPATING IN OUR MARONITE PARISHES AND COMMUNITIES

SUPPORTING, ENGAGING, LISTENING AND COMMUNICATING



The Maronite Eparchy of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania



# FOREWORD

The Maronite Eparchy of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania is committed to safeguarding children, young people and those who are vulnerable. This is a duty entrusted to us by Christ Himself.

We have zero tolerance to any activity that makes children, young people and those who are vulnerable feel unsafe in any way.

Our Parishes, organisations and communities have a responsibility to help everyone reach their potential, especially through participation in and engagement

with the life and activities of our Church. By encouraging our children and young people to participate, we are also ensuring they play a critical role in making decisions that impact them directly.

This helps build and nurture our community of faith particularly for our future generations, to support our children and young people in their human, spiritual and moral development. Building a community of faith benefits mental and emotional health, provides longer-term happiness and fosters contribution to society.

Therefore, the Eparchy, its staff and volunteers endorse the principles and practices of participation expressed in this brochure as part of its commitment to enabling children to participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously, and that we are always awake to ensuring we have cultures and adopt strategies that put the interest of children first, to keep them safe.

† **Antoine-Charbel Tarabay**  
Maronite Bishop of Australia,  
New Zealand and Oceania



## ENCOURAGING THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

*'The effective protection of minors and a commitment to ensure their human and spiritual development, in keeping with the dignity of the human person, are integral parts of the Gospel message that the Church and all members of the faithful are called to spread throughout the world.'* – Pope Francis

### OUR SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

*"Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. In the Maronite Eparchy of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania, we consider the safety and wellbeing of all persons, especially children, young people and the vulnerable, to be our highest priority. We have a zero tolerance for abuse of any kind, and we continuously work to respond effectively to all concerns and complaints."*

By the directive His Excellency Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, this commitment to the safety of children and young people extends to clergy, employees and volunteers within the Maronite Eparchy of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguarding children and young people from abuse.

The Church has a mission-driven moral and legal responsibility to create nurturing environments where children are respected, where their voices are heard, and where they feel safe and are safe.

Preventing child abuse requires proactive approaches across policies, procedures and practices consistent with the requirements of the:

- NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS (Australian Human Rights Commission)
- RELEVANT CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN/CHILD SAFE STANDARDS BODIES IN EACH STATE AND TERRITORY
- NATIONAL CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS (Catholic Professional Standards Ltd)

A culture of safety within the Church ensures that children and young people can actively and fully participate in the life of the Church and realise their potential in a faith community.



# SUPPORTING, ENGAGING, LISTENING AND COMMUNICATING WITH OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

*We value children and young people in our Eparchy, parishes and communities. Empowering children by supporting them to take part in discussions about their safety gives them the confidence and ability to speak up if they're being harmed, or feel unsafe.*

**WHAT DO WE DO TO ENSURE CHILDREN ARE ENCOURAGED TO SPEAK UP AND ARE BELIEVED?  
HOW DO WE IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEM?**



## We are listening

Listening to children and young people in our Maronite parishes, groups and communities means we have to be present and attentive. Actively listening can encourage them to speak up, it builds their confidence and ensures our practices continue to be informed by their ideas and their needs.

### For those who work with children

We provide employees and volunteers working with children across the Eparchy with training that equips them

with the skills to listen and respond in a safe manner. We are also ensuring that easy access to training information and policy and procedures to help create environments where children and young people are listened to and are welcome.

### For children and young people

Given the growing number of groups in parishes, especially catering to children from as young as five to 17 in parishes, we adopt multiple opportunities for them to participate in decision making processes where they can voice their concerns, express their views and ideas, and we can learn from their insights. This helps build a culture of openness and encouraging everyone – regardless of ability – to feel confident they can express opinions and be listened to.

This can be seen in our parishes where many have established a Family Committee for families with children younger than five years, Fersen Al Adra (Knights of Mary) Committee for children in primary school and a Teen Flames Committee for children in high school. These committees are comprised of a clerical chaplain and young adults who actively engage and minister to young families and children by assisting in their

spiritual development and growth on a weekly basis every Saturday or Sunday on parish premises.



## We support and engage

Positive and affirming experiences through our Parishes, various Maronite organisations, groups and committees for children and young people helps children and young people feel empowered and engaged within their faith communities. They are supported by clergy, religious and volunteers

who are committed to helping them grow in the Maronite Catholic faith and cultivating an appreciation of the rich cultural heritage of the Maronite Church.

**For those who work with children**

We provide our workers with children and young people, including volunteers, with training so they are attuned to signs of harm and able to facilitate child-friendly ways to communicate and raise concerns. Training also includes strategies to know how to encourage children to express themselves and to respond appropriately to all views with respect. We also work to continuously foster an environment that treats all children as valuable, loved and cherished.

**For children and young people**

Through positive and affirming experiences children and young people are empowered to live dignified fruitful and rewarding lives. This builds their confidence in themselves and in their Maronite community. These experiences also recognise the importance of and encourage friendships and peer support, helping children feel safe and be less isolated.



*We Communicate*

Children and young people will find their voice in a safe and supportive environment. This for instance is the essence of programs such as our Fersen Al Adra (for children in primary school) and Maronite Teens' Flame (for children in high school), which are specifically intended to have young adult youth ministering and supporting the spiritual formation of children and build our faith community from early on through weekly prayer, discussion, learning and living through planned activities, games and excursions.

**For those who work with children**

Priests, clergy and volunteers are supported to ensure all printed, verbal and online communication is age appropriate and designed to be easily understood. Their training and processes also require they create additional channels for children and young people to access information regarding their rights and their responsibilities. They are also trained to understand the importance of two-way communication. WhatsApp Parents are kept informed and groups are created for parents to keep them informed of programs and upcoming events.

**For children and young people**

Children and young people are encouraged and prompted to provide ideas and suggestions, and express opinions to help them connect in a safe and supportive environment. This contributes to them feeling safe to be themselves, and helps them recognise when something does not seem right, but also know what to do. WhatsApp support groups are created for Maronite TeensFlame children and the committee members at their local parishes as a way to listen, engage and communicate.



**SAFEGUARDING POCKET GUIDE**



The Maronite Eparchy of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania

*'The effective protection of minors and a commitment to ensure their human and spiritual development, in keeping with the dignity of the human person, are integral parts of the Gospel message that the Church and all members of the faithful are called to spread throughout the world.'*

*- Pope Francis*

**OUR SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT**



SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY



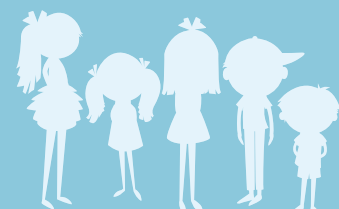
ZERO TOLERANCE FOR ABUSE OF ANY KIND



THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF ALL PERSONS IS OUR HIGHEST PRIORITY



RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO ALL CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS



*A culture of safety helps ensure children and young people can actively and fully participate in the life of the Church and realise their potential in our faith community.*

[www.maronitesafeguarding.org.au](http://www.maronitesafeguarding.org.au)



# SUPPORT SERVICES

## MARONITE SAFEGUARDING

*The Chancery, Maronite Catholic Diocese of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania*

**P:** (02) 8831 0000  
**E:** [safeguarding@maronite.org.au](mailto:safeguarding@maronite.org.au)  
**W:** [www.maronite.org.au](http://www.maronite.org.au)

## MARONITECARE

**P:** 1300 627 227  
**E:** [admin@maronitecare.org.au](mailto:admin@maronitecare.org.au)  
**W:** [maronitecare.org.au](http://maronitecare.org.au)

## LIFELINE

**P:** 13 11 14  
**W:** [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

## BEYOND BLUE

**P:** 1300 22 4636  
**W:** [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

## 1800RESPECT

**P:** 1800 737 732  
**W:** [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)

## KIDS HELPLINE

**P:** 1800 55 1800  
**W:** [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

## HEADSPACE

**P:** 1800 650 890  
**W:** [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)

## NSW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LINE

**P:** 1800 65 64 63  
**W:** [www.dvns.org.au](http://www.dvns.org.au)

## NSW CHILD PROTECTION HELPLINE

**P:** 132 111  
**W:** <https://www.reporterchildstory.nsw.gov.au/>

## ESAFETY COMMISSIONER

**W:** [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)



### MARONITE SAFEGUARDING OFFICE



**PHONE**  
02 8831 0000



**EMAIL**  
[safeguarding@maronite.org.au](mailto:safeguarding@maronite.org.au)

*Information can be shared anonymously.*

*Our Parishes, organisations and communities have a responsibility to help everyone reach their potential, through participation in and engagement with the life and activities of our Church.*



*Children and young people play a critical role in making decisions that impact them directly.*



### IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

We have **zero tolerance** to any activity that makes children, young people and those who are vulnerable feel unsafe in any way.

**SAFEGUARDING OFFICE OF THE CHANCERY**

02 8831 0000

### 3 RS FOR MANAGING ABUSE DISCLOSURE AND COMPLAINTS



**RESPOND**  
BE AVAILABLE  
LISTEN AND SUPPORT



**RECORD**  
MAKE A RECORD  
STORE SECURELY



**REFER**  
SEEK ADVICE  
REFER WITHIN 24 HOURS