Code of Conduct

Section 1 - Purpose

Message from the Bishop

(1) I am pleased to introduce the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (the Diocese) Code of Conduct (Code) which provides guidance on the expected standards of conduct, professional behaviour the Diocese requires of its workers.

(2) The Code is aimed at modelling and building a contemporary Catholic workplace that is safe, supportive, collaborative and compliant with relevant laws.

(3) The Code is consistent with the teachings and values of the Catholic Church and the principles and values detailed in Integrity in our Common Mission.

(4) Our Diocesan values of Compassion, Hope, Integrity, Justice and Participation are reflected within this Code together with the Ten Theological Principles approved by the 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle to be used as the basis of our life together. Throughout the Code to ensure that Code aligns with the Diocesan values and 10 Theological Principles there is cross referencing to support the workers of the Diocese to understand how their responsibilities under the Code are linked to the Church.

(5) Not all of us are Catholic but we are working together to support the mission of the Church and to see how what is expected of us under this Code of Conduct relates to our values and the 10 Theological Principles.

(6) I commend the work to identify how the expectations under this Code of Conduct apply to the 10 Theological Principles[1]:

a. Seek first the Kingdom of God – our mission is to evangelise.
b. The Equality of All Believers – all the baptised have the same right and duty to participate in our life and mission.
c. Faith Development is a Life-Long Process – formation is not the privilege of the few, but a right and duty of all.
d. The Dignity of the Human Person – all our activity should be marked by a concern for persons affected by it.
e. Diversity of Gifts – it is better that many be involved than that a few do everything.
f. Diversity of Ministries/Unity of Purpose – we all have gifts that differ according to the grace given to use, let us use them.
g. Servant Leadership – leadership in the Church is a ministry of service.
h. Decision-making by Discernment – we seek to arrive at a decision that all can accept gracefully and support wholeheartedly.
i. Read the Signs of the Times – be open to what the spirit is saying through the hearts and minds of God's people.
j. Concern for Ecumenism – we seek to strengthen our bonds with all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

1 Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, Diocesan Pastoral Plan. Adopted by the 1992-1993 Diocesan Synod.

Section 2 - Scope

(7) The Code applies to all workers of the Diocese. Workers include paid employees, religious, volunteers, contractors and students on work placements. Lawyers, chartered accountants, religious and Vicars General may be subject to additional external obligations, these external obligations would take precedence to the extent any inconsistency.

(8) The Code outlines the obligations, responsibilities and standards of behaviour the Diocese requires of all workers, to uphold the values, integrity and reputation of the Diocese. It does not form part of an employee's contract of employment.

(9) Workers are to make themselves familiar with the requirements of the Code and ensure they comply with obligations, responsibilities and standards of behaviour outlined within it. If workers do not understand this Code or require clarification they must seek answers to their questions.

(10) Certain sections of the Code reflect the requirements of legislation, and breaches of these conditions may be punishable by law

Section 3 - Policy Principles

Commitment to Safeguarding

(11) The Diocese is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, particularly those who participate in the life of the Diocese. The Diocese has zero-tolerance of any abuse.[2]

(12) The Diocese understands that there is an inherent imbalance of power and position experienced by children and vulnerable adults when interacting with workers placed in positions of authority and responsibility.[3]

(13) The Diocese expects that additional courtesy, consideration is applied to children and vulnerable adults from marginalised grounds and no assault, challenge or denial of identity and experience occurs. This is achieved through shared respect, shared meaning and shared knowledge.[4]

(14) Workers of the Diocese are expected to:

a. Foster a safeguarding culture that recognises and upholds the dignity, diversity and rights of all children and vulnerable adults, with particular attention to those who have increased individual vulnerability.[5]
b. Empower children and vulnerable adults to have their say and to be listened to.[6]
c. Encourage open communications with families and communities to enable their participation in decisions about the safety of children and vulnerable adults.[7]
d. Foster safe and supportive relationships between diocesan workers, children and vulnerable adults, both in person and online.[8]
e. Be aware of the causes and signs of abuse and indicators of increased situation and individual risk in the physical and online environments.[9]
f. Respond to a disclosure of abuse from a child or vulnerable adult appropriately, with the upmost care and support.[10]
g. Ensure that concerns for the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults are reported to the external authorities and the Office of Safeguarding in accordance with the worker's legal, professional and policy obligations.

h. Support Police and other statutory and diocesan authorities who are conducting inquiries into alleged criminality or abuse against children and vulnerable adults.

i. Participate in safeguarding training in accordance with diocesan expectations.[11]

j. Support diocesan assessment and management of elevated risks to children or vulnerable adults.

k. Act in accordance with diocesan policies and procedures in managing complaints.

l. Contribute to diocesan compliance and familiarise themselves with the NSW Child Safe Standards and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

2 Address by Pope Francis to the Italian Episcopal Conference for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable People, 18 November 2023. "First of all, protect: participating actively in the suffering of the wounded person and ensuring that all the community is responsible for the protection of minors and those who are most vulnerable."
3 Indicator 1.4.4 of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standard (Ed. 2, 2022) "The Code of Conduct outlines the importance of considering how power imbalances can occur in ministries and services."
4 A Theology of Communion to underscore the principles of Integrity in our Common Mission from Integrity in Ministry from Integrity in Our Common Mission, November 2023. "We all have a responsibility to protect, honour and advance the dignity of every human person."
5 Standard 4 of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Ed. 2, 2022) "Recognises diversity and provides appropriate supports in inclusive ways."
6 Standard 2 of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Ed. 2, 2022) "Children and adults are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them are taken seriously."
7 Standard 3 of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Ed 2, 2022) "Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting the safeguarding of children and adults."
8 The Dignity of the Human Person, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. Theological Principles. Note: safe and supportive relationships respect the dignity of all people.
9 Criterion 7.2 of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Ed. 2, 2022) "Personnel are supported to recognise the nature and indicators of child abuse, including harmful behaviours by a child towards another child."
10 Criterion 7.4 of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Ed. 2, 2022) "Personnel have the information and skills to respond effectively to safeguarding risks, concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse."
11 Our Common Mission: National Framework for all Catholic Ministry and Service (2022) "In committing to lifelong formation, we have a responsibility to … undertake relevant education, training and development, including in safeguarding, professional standards and interculturality."

Lawful Compliance

(15) Workers must act lawfully and comply with all legislative, contractual and industrial requirements while engaged by the Diocese.[12]

(16) Workers must comply with the Diocese's policies and follow all reasonable and lawful directions given by the Diocese.

12 Diversity of Ministries/Unity of Purpose, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. Theological Principles. Note: respecting the diversity of roles and functions and by extension legal, contractual and industrial requirements of those roles and functions.

Ethical Behaviour

(17) Workers of the Diocese are expected to:

a. Respect the dignity, rights and views of others.[13]

b. Listen and seek to understand different points of view (this does not necessarily mean agreeing with the point of view).[14]

c. Be sensitive and helpful to those who have difficulty with language or communication.[15]

d. Be honest and act with integrity at all times.

e. Act respectfully at all times, including respecting cultural, ethnic and religious differences.[16]

f. Not engage in hate speech as defined as intentionally inciting racial hatred in public that would cause a reasonable person who was the target of the incitement of hatred to fear harassment, intimidation or violence or fear for the reasonable person's safety. For the purposes of this clause, it is irrelevant whether the person engaging in the conduct has been charged with or convicted of any offence arising from the conduct.

g. Promote the work of the Diocese and conduct themselves in a manner which will not bring the Diocese into

disrepute and/or damage the reputation of the Diocese including in a private capacity.[17]

h. Work collaboratively and acknowledge the genuine contributions that others make.[18]
i. Express constructive feedback considerately and in a moderate tone.
j. Not harass, bully or discriminate against colleagues, students, people we support or members of the community.
k. Refrain from making vexatious or malicious allegations against other workers of the Diocese.
l. Be courteous, fair, sensitive and considerate to the needs of others.[19]
m. Actively assist in managing workplace conflict that personally affects them or workers under their supervision to create positive and constructive outcomes.
n. Conduct themselves in accordance with the principles of Catholic Social Teachings of the universal Church.[20]

13 The Dignity of the Human Person, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: respecting the dignity, rights and views of others is central to the concern for people.
14 Decision-making by Discernment, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: arriving at decision all can accept and support by being open to listen and learn.
15 The Dignity of the Human Person, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: being sensitive to those who have difficulty with language or communication highlights genuine concern for the person.
16 Servant Leadership, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: servant leadership relies on respect for each other including our differences to encourage open communication regardless of position.
17 Seek First the Kingdom of God, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: promoting the works of the Diocese is a form of evangelisation.
18 Decision-making by Discernment, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: working collaboratively and acknowledging contributions of others recognises the value of each persons unique experience of God in life.
19 The Dignity of the Human Person, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: courteous, fair, sensitive and considerate promotes growth of persons into maturity in Christ.
20 Faith Development is a Life-Long Process, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: familiarisation with the Social Teachings highlights growth in Christian maturity in order to participate fully in Christ's mission.

Professional Behaviour and Development

(18) Workers of the Diocese are expected to:

a. Maintain a high standard and quality of work.
b. Maintain and develop knowledge and understanding of their area of expertise.[21]
c. Being open to processes of personal and organisational review and development.
d. Continuously seek to improve work performance and bring about improvements in the workplace.
e. Maintain clear communications with workers, clients and supervisors.[22]
f. Recognise that former students and clients transitioning to independence or adulthood may experience a residual period of vulnerability based on their former relationships with Diocesan workers. Diocesan workers must demonstrate the highest levels of care and consideration in developing relationships with former students or clients and discuss the engagement with the worker's supervisor.
g. Consult widely, seek consensus, and provide feedback before making important decisions where appropriate.[23]
h. In consideration of the context, use appropriate consultation methods that provide appropriate transparency, collaboration and involvement in decision-making where appropriate.[24]
i. Act within the scope of their role and not beyond an area of expertise not expressly stated and not engaging in tasks or activities for which we have inadequate expertise and qualifications.[25]
j. Within the scope of the or their role, provide workers with guidance, training, support and supervision.
k. Seek advice and guidance from appropriately qualified supervisors where appropriate.[26]
l. Exercise care, responsible and sound judgement when carrying out their duties.[27]
m. Ensure procedural fairness is followed in all processes.[28]
n. Accept that by virtue of a position of trust of leadership we are placed in a position of power.

o. Not ignore work duties or waste time during working hours.[29]
p. Not take or seek to take improper advantage of any information gained in the course of their engagement.
q. Not take or seek to take improper advantage of their position, status or institutional power to benefit themselves or others.
r. Not allow personal political views/affiliations or other personal interests to influence the performance of duties or exercise of responsibilities.
s. Where relevant, adhere to any dress code requirements of the Diocese.
t. Maintain confidentiality and privacy where required.
u. Report to the Diocese any instance where a worker believes they, or anyone within their workplace, has breached an obligation under this policy.

20 Diversity of Gifts, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: recognition and utilisation of individual gifts in reflected in professional behaviour and development.
21 Concerns for Ecumenism, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: clear communication allows us to deepen bonds and restore unity between each other.
22 Decision-making by Discernment, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: wide consultation, seeking consensus and providing feedback reflects decision making by discernment.
24 Decision-making by Discernment, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: using consultation methods that provide transparency and collaboration lead to greater involvement in decision making.
25 Diversity of Gifts, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: acting within the scope of their role and not beyond an area of expertise recognises and utilises the diversity of gifts of each person.
26 Diversity of Gifts, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: seeking advice and guidance from qualified supervisors recognises knowledge and experience of others.
27 Diversity of Gifts, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: carrying out duties with care, responsibility and sound judgement ensures concern for persons.
28 The Dignity of the Human Person, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: procedural fairness respects the inherent value of every individual to be treated with respect.
29 Catholic Social Teachings, Common Good, Stewardship. Note: fundamental to this social teaching is accountability and the responsibility to respect resources and reduce waste.

Workplace Health and Safety

(19) Workers of the Diocese are expected to:

a. Take reasonable care of their safety and health at all times.
b. Take reasonable steps that their acts/omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of others.
c. Comply and cooperate with any reasonable instruction, policy or procedure, including with respect to work health and safety matters.[30]
d. Refrain from carrying out their duties under the influence of alcohol, any illegal substance, or any drug which impairs work performance, impacts behaviour or judgement, or poses a safety risk to themselves or others.

30 Diversity of Gifts, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: complying and cooperating with reasonable instruction is an example of recognise experience, knowledge and competence.

Conflicts of Interest

(20) A conflict of interest includes any circumstances, whether actual or perceived, arising from a conflict between the performance of a worker's professional duties with the Diocese and their personal interest.

(21) Workers are to take all appropriate steps to disclose a conflict of interest (or potential conflict) to the Diocese as soon as the worker becomes aware of it.[31]

(22) A conflict of interest can arise where there is a reasonable expectation of a personal benefit, direct or indirect, for a worker that could influence the performance of their duties. This benefit may be financial or non-financial.

(23) Workers must take suitable measures to avoid, or appropriately deal with, any situation or relationship they may have where a conflict of interest could, directly or indirectly, compromise the performance of their duties.

(24) A worker may ask themselves the following questions to assist in identifying whether a situation or relationship is potentially a conflict of interest:

a. Do I have personal interests that may conflict, or be perceived to conflict, with my position at the Diocese?
b. Could there be benefits for me now, or in the future, that could cast doubt on my objectivity?
c. How will my involvement in a decision or action be viewed by others?
d. Does my involvement appear fair and reasonable in all the circumstances?

31 Diversity of Ministries/Unity of Purpose, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: identifying and responding appropriately to conflicts of interest ensures unity of purpose due to personal interests not impacting on professional interests.

Related Party Transactions

(25) A related party transaction is the transfer of resources, services, or obligations between related parties. It does not have to include a financial payment.

(26) Related parties include:

a. Spouse, child, parent and sibling.
b. Anyone who lives in the household of the worker.
c. Any company or business in which the worker, or someone who lives in the household of the worker holds, shares or has responsibility for.
d. Other family related by blood or marriage, but this may depend on context.
e. An agency, school, or parish that is part of the Diocese

(27) A related party transaction can include:

a. Purchases, sales or donations.
b. Receiving goods, services or property.
c. Leases.
d. Transferring property, including intellectual property.
e. Loans.
f. Providing employees or volunteers.
g. Providing shared services such as accounting or legal services at a discounted rate or for free.

(28) Workers must disclose a related party transaction and obtain appropriate approval from their manager to enter into a related party transaction.[32]

(29) Workers must maintain relevant evidence to show a decision was made at ‘arms length’.

(30) A transaction is at ‘arms length’ if the relevant parties have dealt with each other as parties normally do when they are not related, so that the outcome of their dealing is a matter of genuine bargaining and includes terms that might reasonably have been agreed between arm’s length parties.

32 Diversity of Ministries/Unity of Purpose, 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Theological Principles. Note: identifying and responding appropriately to conflicts of interest ensures unity of purpose due to personal interests not impacting on professional interests.

Gifts and Benefits

(31) Workers must not solicit or accept gifts, benefits or hospitality which might be reasonably seen to either directly or indirectly compromise or influence their professional duties within the Diocese.[33]

(32) All gifts from external parties must be brought to the attention of the relevant manager who will decide how the gift should be treated, in line with financial protocols and policies of the Diocese.

(33) The acceptance of monetary gifts such as cash, cheques, money orders, travellers' cheques, direct deposits and the like under any circumstances is forbidden. Any external party wishing to make a legitimate monetary donation to the Diocese should do so in accordance with the Fundraising Policy. The exception is gift cards provided in accordance with clause (35).

(34) A worker who receives a gift of cultural or historical value on behalf of the Diocese must report the gift to the relevant manager for determination of where the gift will be retained.

(35) Generally, gifts or a series of gifts received within a calendar year of a nominal value ($100 or less) or moderate acts of hospitality offered as a genuine thank you by a client, may be personally retained unless there is an expectation of something expected in return, as long as they have not been solicited by the worker or could be seen to have comprised or unduly influenced the worker's professional duties with the Diocese.

(36) Gifts of hospitality offered as an inducement to purchase, provide information, or treat someone favourable are not acceptable regardless of their monetary value. Examples of inducement include a recruitment agency offering theatre tickets for each temporary person engaged.

(37) Gifts such as a Christmas hamper of a box of chocolates from a consultant, should be shared and made available for consumption by all workers. Consideration should also be given to donating such gifts to charity.

(38) A worker must not offer or give a gift or hospitality using Diocesan or agency funds or offer gifts to other workers (other than a reasonable contribution to a farewell gift or significant event) without the prior approval of their manager.

(39) Gifts or hospitality offered by a worker with a greater than nominal value must be reported to their manager and recorded in the Gifts and Benefits Register.

33 Catholic Social Teachings, Stewardship. Note: stewardship involves the responsible management and care of resources which includes the provision of gifts and benefits.

Secondary Employment

a. Workers employed on a full-time basis must seek and obtain approval in writing from the Diocese prior to engaging in any secondary employment or business activity, including employment with a family company.
b. Part-time and casual workers must seek approval from their manager where they are engaged in secondary employment that could adversely impact on the worker's ability to perform their duties with the Diocese and may result in a potential conflict of interest, including work, health and safety concerns, or where secondary employment may affect the Diocese's financial position, services or standing in the community.
c. Approval for secondary employment is still required where workers are on leave, including periods of leave without pay.
d. Where a worker is already involved in secondary employment, prior to seeking employment with the Diocese, they must provide details of the secondary employment to the Diocese and obtain the necessary approval.

e. Current and former workers are to seek and obtain approval in writing from the Diocese or its agencies to act in the capacity of a volunteer.

Social Media

(40) Workers should not use social media in a manner which may bring the Diocese into disrepute. Refer to the Media Policy and associated documents in this regard.

Public Comment

(41) Only authorised workers are permitted to make public statements or give interviews on behalf of the Diocese to a media representative.

Management of Time and Resources

(42) Workers must use the Diocese resources economically and ethically. Such resources include money, facilities, equipment (e.g. phones, computers, iPads, and fax machines), vehicles. Services (e.g. internet) and any other property which is owned or is the responsibility of the Diocese.[34]

(43) Workers also have a duty to ensure the resources of the Diocese are used only for their intended purpose, are well maintained and secured against theft or misuse.

(44) Workers are fully accountable for the use of the Diocese work time and resources including intellectual property developed during the course of their employment. Workers should not use Diocesan work time or resources for an outside interest, secondary employment or personal gain, such examples include the development of a new commercial idea or writing a book.

(45) Workers have a duty to report to the Diocese any improper use, waste or abuse of resources, corrupt or fraudulent conduct or inadequate administration or accountability.

34 Catholic Social Teachings, Stewardship. Note: fundamental to this social teaching is accountability and the responsibility to respect resources and reduce waste.

Protected Disclosures

(46) In reporting any suspected improper use, fraud, waste or abuse of resources, corrupt conduct, inadequate administration or accountability, workers are entitled to seek support and protection when making such disclosures, and to be notified of the action taken in relation to the disclosure.

(47) Workers are not entitled to protection for disclosures which, on investigation, are found to be vexatious or malicious allegations, and may be liable for disciplinary action as a result.

Privacy, Confidentiality and Record Keeping

(48) Workers must not divulge, either during employment or after, any confidential information gained as a worker of the Diocese.

(49) Workers of the Diocese are expected to:

a. Comply with relevant laws and regulations regarding the collection, dissemination, use and security of all information and abide by the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) found in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).
b. Treat confidential and personal information about colleagues, volunteers, students, people we support and

other members of the community respectfully.

c. Exercise caution and sound judgement in discussing other people's confidential and personal information.
d. Only use such information for work-related purposes.
e. Only communicate such information to those who need to know it in order to perform their role

(50) Sharing of confidential information with external persons or agencies may only occur:

a. Within the established guidelines for such communication, or
b. In accordance with any relevant legislation relating to the provision of such information.

(51) In relation to record keeping, workers are expected to maintain record that demonstrate in the future why certain things were done and why they were done in a certain way.

Section 4 - Consequences of Breaching this Policy

(52) Any worker found to be in breach of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to counselling, performance management, a warning, suspension or dismissal. This could also result in the notification to external agencies.

Section 5 - Notations

(53) If there is any inconsistency between a policy document in existence before the commencement of this policy, and a policy document developed after the commencement of this policy, the latter applies to the extent of the inconsistency.

Section 6 - Document Review

(54) This policy will be reviewed when there is a legislative change, organisational change, delegations change, technology change or at least every 3 years to ensure it continues to be current and effective.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	27th March 2026
Review Date	27th March 2029
Approval Authority	Bishop
Approval Date	24th March 2026
Expiry Date	To Be Advised
Unit Head	Megan Grainger Chief Governance Officer
Enquiries Contact	Corporate Services

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Diocesan worker" - A person who carries out work in any capacity for an employer or 'Person Conducting a Business Undertaking'. This includes employees, clergy, religious, trainees, apprentices, student placements, volunteers and contractors. In the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, 'diocesan worker' includes those who carry out work in and for parishes within the Diocese, within and for diocesan agencies and the diocesan curia.

"Children" - Refers to people under the age of 18 years. [1] [1] Under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, there is a differentiation between children (0-15 yrs) and young people (16-17 yrs). However, the Crimes Act 1900 and the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 define children as any person less than 18 years of age. The Children's Guardian Act 2019, other than for purposes of Part 6 Child Employment, also defines children as persons under 18 years of age. The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards defines children as "individuals under 18 years of age". The definition recognises that there is a graduation towards independence that begins for children prior to their 18th birthday, through adolescence increasing independence and self-determination is afforded a child, e.g. making some medical decisions independent of their parents etc.

"Conflict of interest" - Also known as a conflict of duty refers to situations where a conflict arises between a public or professional duty and a private interest or duty owed to another organisation or group (including volunteering). This conflict could influence the performance of official duties and responsibilities. Such conflict generally involves opposing principles or incompatible wishes or needs. Conflicts of interests can be: • Actual - involves direct conflict between your current duties and responsibilities and existing private interests; or • Potential - where a person has a private interest that could interfere with the performance of their official duties and responsibilities in the future; or • Reasonably perceived - where a reasonable person could perceive that your private interests are, or are likely to, improperly influence the performance of your duties, irrespective of whether this is the fact.

"Vulnerable adult" - On 7 May 2019 Vos Estis Lux Mundi established a definition of vulnerability. The revised decree (27 March 2023) establishes that a vulnerable adult: means any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which in fact, even occasionally, limits his or her capacity to understand or will or otherwise resist the offence." Vos Estis Lux Mundi also states that "a person habitually suffering from the imperfect use of reason shall be equated with a minor". The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Ed. 2) apply the term 'adult at risk' which "means any person aged 18 years and over who is at increased risk of experiencing abuse". The term is very broad and significantly beyond what canon law deems to be vulnerable. The Diocese is guided by the understanding of vulnerability set out in Vos Estis Lux Mundi. To assist practical interpretation, the Diocese considers vulnerable adults as those who: • have physical disability of sufficient severity as to make them dependent on another for assistance in everyday activities and self-care; • have a chronic or persistent mental illness that significantly impedes their competence to self-determine their lives; • have a developmental delay or

other cognitive disability to a moderate or profound degree; • is neurodiverse to a degree that ongoing functioning in society requires assistance and support from another; or • becomes physically or mentally frail as a result of advanced years or personal history (e.g. having been in institutional or statutory care). Whilst a person may have a medical diagnosis or a statutory or other classification which evidences that person's vulnerability; it is not a prerequisite. For the purposes of this policy, the assessment of the diocesan worker that a person meets one or more of the criteria, based on credible evidence, is sufficient to determine that a person should be afforded the protections of being a vulnerable adult. Individuals and families (including children) or other relationship groups who are classified as refugees or asylum seekers by the Australian Government are also considered vulnerable. An asylum seeker is a person who has fled their own country and applied for protection as a refugee.

"Personal information" - Information or an opinion, whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or reasonably identifiable, from the information or opinion. This includes sensitive information.

"Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (the Diocese)" - The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (the Diocese) is inclusive of all parishes and agencies, communities, ministries and works that are under the authority of the Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle. The Bishop takes his authority from Canon Law (Canons 375-402). The geographical coverage of the Diocese includes all or part of the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Cessnock, Port Stephens, Singleton, Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter, Dungog and Mid-Coast local government areas, with almost 160,000 Catholics, 38 parishes and serviced by multiple diocesan ministries and agencies. The Diocese is not wholly geographic in nature. There are elements of the Catholic Church operating within the physical boundaries of the Diocese that do not fall under the authority of the Bishop and are not a part of the Diocese. Equally, particular diocesan ministries occur within external institutions (e.g. Prison Chaplaincy, Hospital Chaplaincy).

"Policy" - A statement of purpose or intent for how the Diocese or Agency wants its workers to manage or respond to particular situations. Diocesan policy will support workers understanding of the Diocese's views and values on specific issues, and what will occur if they are not followed. Policies may be imposed or required by external stimuli (civil or canonical law, societal or church regulation) or as a means of promoting or addressing a diocesan priority. A policy can be security related also and that can be used to identify risks and mitigate risks.

"Safeguarding" - Safeguarding is a set of guiding principles that came to prominence in the UK. Safeguarding children are the actions taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means: • protecting children from abuse and maltreatment • preventing harm to children's health or development • ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care • taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes. Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. Safeguarding of vulnerable adults is based on the English Care Act 2014 and require that persons assessed as an 'adult at risk' are protected from abuse or neglect and that intervention is based on six principles: • Empowerment: putting people first and helping those who lack mental capacity feel involved and informed • Protection: supporting victims so they can take action • Prevention: responding quickly to suspected cases of abuse • Proportionality: making sure what we do is appropriate to the situation and for the individual • Partnership: sharing the right information in the right way • Accountability: making sure all agencies have a clear role

"Worker" - A person who carries out work in any capacity for an employer or 'Person Conducting a Business Undertaking'. This includes: • employees; • teachers; • educators; • contractors; • apprentices; • clergy; • religious; • student placements; • trainees; and • volunteers/unpaid . In the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, 'worker' includes those who carry out work in diocesan parishes, within diocesan agencies and as a part of the diocesan curia.

"Record" - Any document or other source of information compiled, recorded, or stored in written form or on film, or by electronic process, or in any other manner or any other means that documents a transaction, event or activity and is used for tracking, reference or compliance purposes within the Diocese.(Section 3(1) State Records Act 1998).

"Confidential information" - Consists of non-public information about a person or an entity that, if disclosed, could reasonably be expected to place either the person or the entity at risk of criminal or civil liability, or damage the person or entity's financial standing, employability, privacy, or reputation.

"Ten Theological Principles" - The Ten (10) Theological Principles approved by the 1992-93 Synod of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle are used as the basis of our life together. They are: 1. Seek first the Kingdom of God – our mission is to evangelise. 2. The Equality of All Believers – all the baptised have the same right and duty to participate in our life and mission. 3. Faith Development is a Life-Long Process – formation is not the privilege of the few, but a right and duty of all. 4. The Dignity of the Human Person – all our activity should be marked by a concern for persons affected by it. 5. Diversity of Gifts – it is better that many be involved than that a few do everything. 6. Diversity of Ministries/Unity of Purpose – we all have gifts that differ according to the grace given to use, let us use them. 7. Servant Leadership – leadership in the Church is a ministry of service. 8. Decision-making by Discernment – we seek to arrive at a decision that all can accept gracefully and support wholeheartedly. 9. Read the Signs of the Times – be open to what the spirit is saying through the hearts and minds of God’s people. 10. Concern for Ecumenism – we seek to strengthen our bonds with all our brothers and sisters in Christ.