

Safeguarding Children and Adults Protocol



Applicable to

To all ministries of Mercy Partners.

Protocol Overview

Mercy Partners is committed to creating and maintaining environments that support the safety, wellbeing and participation of all people in accordance with legislative requirements and its mission and values.

Mercy Partners' ministries have a responsibility to safeguard children and at risk adults through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse.

Mercy Partners supports its ministries to ensure they are also committed to:

- Priorising the safety and best interests of the children and adults at risk whom they work with.
- Creating a culture of safety and respect in the leadership and governance of their ministry.
- Understanding the nature and risks of abuse and taking deliberate and immediate steps to prevent it.
- Encourage the participation of children, adults at risk, families and communities in providing feedback on and input into decisions that affect their safety.
- Responding to complaints of abuse sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in accordance with its lawful obligations and its policies and procedures.

Protocol Details

Mercy Partners is the Church authority responsible for sponsoring ministries on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church and has a responsibility for the protection of children and adults. The civil law obligations relating to these ministries rest with various civil law corporations which are responsible for the conduct of the various ministries. Mercy Partners is committed to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism in its ministries in the area of safety for children and adults.

Mercy Partners appoints the Chief Executive Officer/Principal of each of their ministry as its agent for reporting breaches of professional standards to the relevant authority. The Board of Mercy Partners reminds its ministries of the relevant reporting requirements of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

Mercy Partners Board directs its ministry's Chief Executive Officer/Principal to report all claims to the Chair of Mercy Partners so that the claims can be managed collaboratively in accordance with the provisions of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. Mercy Partners requires that all disclosures of abuse by employees or volunteers be reported to the Chair of the Board of Mercy Partners to ensure appropriate management.

The Board of Mercy Partners also requires that:

- Any current claims under Towards Healing or civil claims before the courts or any investigations by the Police are reported also to Mercy Partners as the Church Authority.
- The ministry has protective practices, policies, guidelines and procedures in place and fully implemented, and these comply with legislation and statutory requirements.
- Policies are regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with legislation.
- Any breaches found in the audit of 'positive notices' i.e. blue cards (schools) or 'yellow cards' (aged care facilities) are rectified.
- Procedures are in place for the selection, recruitment, professional development and formation of staff and volunteers to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults.
- Legislative requirements for professional development for staff and volunteers about recognising and reporting child abuse are regularly undertaken.
- Ministry boards should have the protection of children and vulnerable adults as a standing agenda item on their Board meeting agenda.

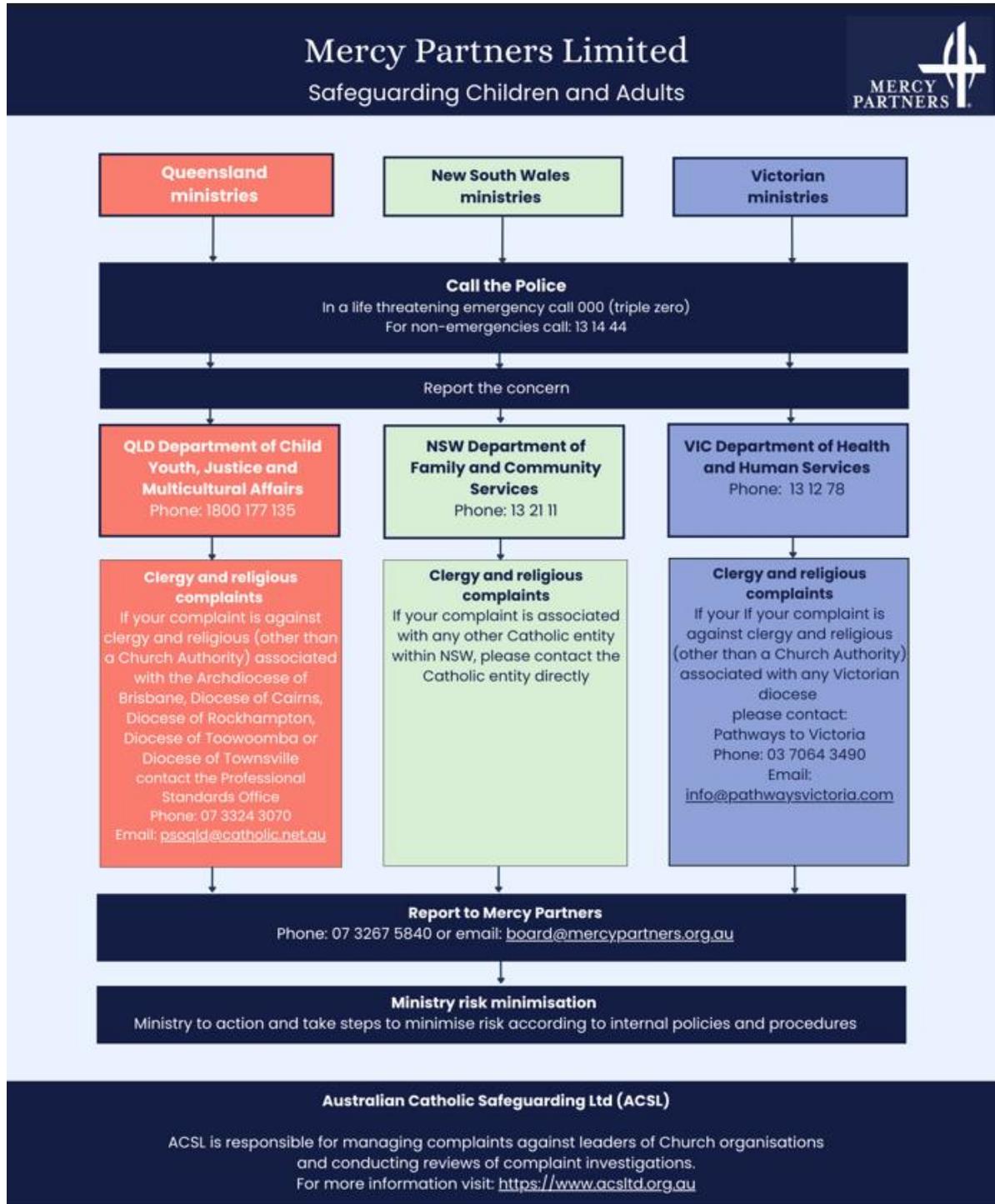
The Board of Mercy Partners requires ministries to implement and comply with the following documents:

- Integrity in Ministry – a document of principles and standards for Catholic Clergy and Religious in Australia (June 2004).
- Integrity in the Service of the Church – a resource document of principles and standards for lay workers in the Catholic Church of Australia (September 2011).
- Towards Healing – Principles and procedures in responding to complaints of abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia (January 2010).

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Reporting to the Board of Mercy Partners

The below diagram details what action is required should a concern or complaint relating to the safety and wellbeing of a child or adult arise.



Version Control					
Version #	Overview of updates	Author	Approved By	Date Approved	Next Review Due
1	Revised. Formerly SPON 2.08 Professional Standards	KC	MP Board	9 November 2022	9 November 2024
2	Nominal Changes: Updated to reference the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and made the protocol applicable to QLD, NSW and VIC.	KC	MP Board	4 April 2023	4 April 2025