

Saint Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church

Child-Safe, Child-Friendly Statement

Introduction

This statement concerns the participation of children and young people in the life of our parish and making the parish a safe environment for them.

It supplements the [Policy and Procedure for Addressing Inappropriate Behaviour](#) and the [Child-safe, Child-friendly Policy](#) of the Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia and provides guidance to parish clergy, officials, volunteers, members and all involved in parish life.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, 'children' are aged 0-12, and 'young people' are aged 13-18.

Child-safe means taking active measures to keep children and young people safe from physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

Child-friendly means creating a trusting environment that values, respects and welcomes children and young people. This means children and young people feel confident to raise any problem or concern and know they will be listened to. Experience shows that abuse most often occurs when children lack that confidence and trust.

All references to the 'parish' and 'parish life' are to Saint Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church, West Gosford, and its activities. References to 'the Diocese' and to 'Diocesan policy' are to the Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia and its policies.

The participation of children and young people in parish life

Our parish wants children and young people involved in the life of the parish to have a safe, happy and spiritually beneficial experience.

To this end, we welcome the appropriate participation of children and young people in parish life, and will plan ways that they can be involved.

We will take into account the views of children and young people when making decisions that affect them.

A positive environment for children and young people

We will ensure that the parish church, hall and grounds are places in which sources of physical harm to all are eliminated or positively managed. In our parish risk assessment and treatment plan we will give particular attention to risks to children and young people.

We will ensure that it is understood that in all parish and Diocesan activities inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people is unacceptable. This includes the conduct of children and young people towards one another.

Supporting our people who work with children and young people

We promote respect, fairness and consideration for parish clergy, officials, and volunteers who work with children.

All new parish clergy, officials, volunteers, and members will receive a copy of this policy and of the Diocesan *Policy and Procedure for Addressing Inappropriate Behaviour*.

Clergy and volunteers

Our parish is committed to ensuring that our clergy and our volunteers who work with children and young people are suitable to do so.

To this end, we will comply with New South Wales law and with Diocesan policy concerning *Working with Children Checks* and *National Criminal History Checks*.

We will ask our clergy and volunteers who work with children to comply with a parish *Code of Conduct* for working with children. The parish *Code of Conduct* for working with children is at **Attachment A**.

We will facilitate appropriate training for our clergy and volunteers who work with children.

Dealing with complaints

Each year the parish Annual General Meeting will appoint two Child Safety Contact Persons to receive and manage any complaints that a child or young person is at risk or has been treated inappropriately. Ideally, one Child Safety Contact Person will be male and one female.

The Child Safety Contact Persons should be trusted parish members who have a demonstrated rapport with children and young people. At least one of the Child Safety Contact Persons should be a fluent Russian speaker. Ideally, at least one of the Child Safety Contact Persons will be a member of the Parish Council.

Complaints will be managed in accordance with the *Policy and Procedure for Addressing Inappropriate Behaviour*, with the parish Child Safety Contact Person providing an intermediate step for dealing with complaints about physical risks to or inappropriate behaviour towards children or young people prior to the involvement of the parish priest. In handling complaints, the Child Safety Contact Persons will be guided by Diocesan policies.

Communication

This statement will be discussed with all new clergy, officials, volunteers, and parish members. Age-appropriate information will be developed to support this process.

A copy of this statement will be posted on our parish website. It will also be regularly promoted in other ways.

A sign will be displayed at the entrance to the parish centre that clearly communicates the fact that the parish is child-safe and child-friendly.

Copies of the Diocesan *Policy and Procedure for Addressing Inappropriate Behaviour* and *Child-safe, Child-friendly Policy* will be readily available.

We will endeavour to hold age-appropriate information sessions for children, young people and adults twice-yearly. These information sessions will be organised and facilitated by the Child Safety Contact Persons and may coincide with other activities such as religious education or parish general meetings.

Review

With the assistance of the Child Safety Contact Persons, this statement will be reviewed by the Parish Council at least every two years. To the extent possible, review of the statement will take into account comments and suggestions from children and young people, parish clergy, officials, volunteers, and members, Diocesan authorities, and the parish insurer.

ATTACHMENT A:

Saint Panteleimon Russian Orthodox Church Code of Conduct for Working with Children and Young People in Parish life

All parish clergy, officials, volunteers will, when working with children and young people in parish life:

- Dress and speak appropriately;
- Provide a positive role model for children, young people and those who care for them;
- Treat children and young people with respect, listen to and value their ideas and opinions;
- Carefully plan all activities involving children and young people to be appropriate to their safety, developmental needs and life experiences;
- Respect the privacy of children and young people and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know;
- Report any concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of harm or abuse;
- Make sustained physical contact only in the event of a medical emergency or when protecting a child or young person from physical harm;
- Make contact outside church activities only when strictly necessary in connection with those activities.

They will not:

- Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
- Use any form of physical force or harsh verbal language as discipline;
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children and young people or do things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves;
- Develop 'special' relationships with specific children or young people ;
- Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
- Make sexually suggestive comments, even as a joke;
- Be alone for more than a very short time with a child or young person;
- Take a child or young person to their home, or encourage meetings, without others present.

I _____ have read the parish Child-safe, child-friendly statement and this Code for Conduct for working with children and young people in parish life.

I understand my responsibilities in working with children and young people and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct.

If I breach this code in any way, for any reason, I will inform the parish priest of my actions and the reasons for them immediately.

Signed:

Witness:

Signed:

Date: