



Archdiocese of Cape Town

Pastoral Letter on the Child Safeguarding Policy

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The life of each child is a blessing given by God and children are to be nurtured, protected and loved. Yet in today's world children are at risk. We sadly acknowledge that child abuse has also occurred in the Church and that there has been failure to deal with it appropriately.

For that reason I promulgated the Archdiocese of Cape Town Child Safeguarding Policy on the Feast of St Theresa of the Child Jesus last year, 1 October 2015. This policy is now being implemented in all parishes of the Archdiocese. It is a positive and comprehensive response to the sad reality of child abuse in its various forms. It strives to ensure the safety of each and every child in his or her interaction within the Church in all circumstances. The laws of the country are a cornerstone of the policy.

The policy has three main safeguarding themes: firstly, the manner in which we interact with children – this is defined in a clear Code of Behaviour and Activities Guidelines. Secondly, the policy ensures that those who interact with children on behalf of the parish are suitable to do so by ensuring Safe Recruiting. Thirdly, it assures a correct response if an abuse arises, including the requirement to report to the civil authorities.

The successful implementation of the Policy requires the involvement of all parish personnel, especially those in ministries involving children or having access to children.

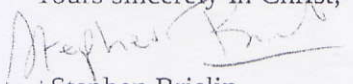
Each parish has a Child Safeguarding Coordinator. The coordinator's function, together with the parish priest, is to administer the policy requirements. This includes communicating the policy to the parish as well as various acts of administration. Many parishioners will be required to participate in this process. I request that this is done with a sense of leadership and personal contribution to the safeguarding process. It will include getting police clearance for personnel. You may be pleased to hear that I have recently received *my* police clearance. In this way each of us shows that our parishes **are** truly safe places for our children.

I request that parishioners get to know the policy. It is available on the Archdiocese website (adct.org.za) and should also be put on parish websites. Important details are also available on parish notice boards.

In conclusion, the Child Safeguarding Policy provides us all with the opportunity to ensure the safety of our children, to actively uphold and strengthen the law and to play a role in our broader communities with our knowledge on safeguarding. It will also contribute to healing the Church, the Body of Christ.

I wish you and your parish all God's blessings and graces.

Yours sincerely in Christ,


+Stephen Brislin
Archbishop of Cape Town



23 April 2016