



FACT SHEET: Person of Concern in a Parish

Information for Parishes where there is a Person of Concern in the Parish community.

The Catholic Diocese of Wilcannia - Forbes has a primary responsibility to provide an environment where all individuals are safe and protected from harm. There may be a time where a Person of Concern enters one of the Parishes of the Diocese and may pose a risk to the safety of members of the Church community, including Children, Young people and Adults at Risk.

What is a Person of Concern?

A Person of Concern refers to an individual that wishes to exercise their right to worship and access the Sacraments who may:

- currently be facing charges for a serious criminal offence;
- be the subject of a substantiated complaint of Child abuse, domestic violence or physical assault;
- have been convicted of an offence relating to Child sexual abuse; and/or
- have a serious criminal conviction resulting in parole conditions or domestic and family violence orders;

When a Person of Concern has been identified in the Parish community, the Safeguarding and Ministerial Office will assist the Parish Priest to put in place an effective risk management strategy that will help protect their Parish community whilst allowing the Person of Concern to maintain their right to access the Sacraments and worship.

There are many ways a Parishioner or Parish Priest may become aware that there is a Person of Concern in the Church community. This may include:

- Self-disclosure
- Information provided by the Police
- Information provided by a Parole Officer
- Barred Working with Children Check
- Information provided by a member of the Church Community

If you have Concerns about a Person the Parish community?

1. A Parishioner should notify the Parish Priest;
2. The Parish Priest must notify the Safeguarding Office as soon as possible;

3. The Safeguarding Office will assist in identifying and assisting with reporting obligations if any exist;
4. The Safeguarding Office will provide advice to the Parish Priest to support him in gathering relevant information such as bail conditions and in preparing an Initial Risk Assessment
5. If necessary, a Care Plan will be written with the input of the Safeguarding Office, the Parish Priest and the Person of Concern.
6. The Parish Priest will monitor the Care Plan and the Person of Concern.

These guidelines are not intended to isolate or discriminate against any individual but have been developed to set in place safe and protective boundaries for the safety of Children, Young People and Adults at Risk.

Relevant Legislation

Office of the Children's Guardian Act (NSW) 2019
Crimes Act (NSW) 1900

Related documents

Visit the Diocese's Safeguarding website to access the Diocese's Policy and Protocols:

1. **Fact Sheet:** Mandatory Reporting
2. **Fact Sheet:** What is a Reportable Crime?
3. **Fact Sheet:** Reporting Crimes to the NSW Police