Melkite Eparchy Safe Ministry Framework

The Melkite Catholic Eparchy Child and At-Risk Adult Safeguarding Policy apply to all Eparch workers—

- ordained and consecrated clergy, deacons, religious, sub deacons,
- lay employees, parish council members, and catechists and general coordinators.
- ministry volunteers, youth leaders, and music coordinators.
- affiliated youth movements, including the Melkite scouts, Eparchial School of Byzantine Music and Marching band.

Our highest priority is the safety, wellbeing and dignity of every person, especially children, young people and at-risk adults.

Our safeguarding framework

The Eparchy Safeguarding Framework commits us to a safeguarding culture. We are responsible for:

- acting in the best interests of children, young people and adults at risk;
- promoting cultural safety for all people;
- speaking up when actions, conduct, language or environments may cause harm;
- embedding effective safeguarding policies and practices across governance and leadership;
- keeping safeguarding resources accessible and regularly reviewed; and
- meeting all mandatory reporting and record-keeping requirements.

The Eparchy's Safeguarding Framework is built around the following six core policies.

Eparchy Safeguarding Framework Policies	
POL-01	**Child and At-Risk Adult Safeguarding Policy** Outlines the Eparchial safety commitment, theological foundations, and core protections for children, young adults and adults at risk.
POL-02	**Code of Conduct for Clergy and Religious** Establishes strict, non-negotiable physical, liturgical, sacramental, and confessional boundaries for all ordained/consecrated representatives.
POL-03	**Parish Volunteer Code of Conduct** Outlines behavioral standards, physical boundaries, and strict digital limits, for example our personal social media direct message ban for parish lay volunteers.
POL-04	**Safer Recruitment and Screening Policy** Prescribes the mandatory multi-layered screening workflow —100-point ID, referee audits, WWCC validations— required before lay recruitment.
POL-05	**Safe Risk Management Policy** Details the official eparchial risk assessment matrix, operational settings, supervision ratios, and third-party hall-hire clauses.
POL-06	**Training and Declaration Protocol** Outlines mandated online learning modules (NSW Office of Children's Guardian, SAFESpace, NZ Children's Act), the nine core learning topics, and annual clergy declarations.

Key roles

The Bishop and the Safeguarding Office have primary responsibility for safeguarding across the Eparchy. Parish Priests and Agency Heads are responsible for safeguarding complaints arising within their parishes and agencies. Their roles and responsibilities are:

Eparch the Bishop has ultimate canonical accountability and formal oversight and receives quarterly compliance reports.

Parish Priests hold ultimate local pastoral, legal and canonical responsibility, including parish screening, risk controls and registers.

Local safeguarding is supported by a qualified lay parishioner nominated by the priest to assist with local compliance, maintain registers and conduct annual audits.

Eparch Safe Office provides central oversight, manages the central registry, coordinates training and administers verification audits.

Independent Contacts receive and manage complaints involving senior clergy to avoid conflicts of interest.

Refer to the Safeguarding our Church Community –- The Eparch Safe Ministry Framework fact sheet.

Principles, Standards and Policies

The Eparchy follows the 10 National Child Safe Principles (Australian Human Rights Commission), and the 10 National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) Edition 2nd and apply the Dual-Scope Protection Framework (NCSS) Edition 2, across two groups—

1. Children and young people — anyone under 18 who participates in eparchial ministries, including altar service, catechesis and parish youth movements.

2. Adults at risk — adults who, because of age, disability, illness, dependence, trauma, isolation, power imbalance or life circumstances, may be unable to protect themselves from mistreatment, neglect or financial exploitation.

National Child Safe Principles	Eparchy Safeguarding Standards applied
Parish Safeguarding Officers	Eparchy Safeguarding Framework Policies

The National Standards, National Principles and Eparchy Safeguarding Policies form an integrated approach to child safety. Together, they support a culture in which safeguarding is understood, consistently applied and regularly reviewed across all ministries, parishes and agencies.

Standards set the expected level of safeguarding practice and accountability.
Principles guide decision-making so that the safety, dignity and wellbeing of children and young people remain central.
Policies translate these expectations into practical requirements for screening, conduct, training, reporting, risk management and oversight.

Used together, these measures help the Eparchy apply multiple, reinforcing strategies to prevent harm, respond appropriately to concerns and strengthen safe ministry practice.