

1: Title Children and Vulnerable Adults Care, Safety & Protection:
Code of Conduct

2: Applies to All staff, volunteers, Christian Brothers and temporary Ministry on-site individuals

- During the provision of an Edmund Rice service
- When resident in an Edmund Rice community house
- When traveling and in accommodation during:
 - o Work related activities
 - o Christian Brothers' community activities.

3. Geographical Application.

All Oceania Province locations – Australia, New Zealand, PNG, , Philippines

4. Legislation/Regulation

The child protection and vulnerable adult response of the Oceania Province of the Christian Brothers is compliant with all relevant National, State and Territory Child protection and vulnerable adult.

5. Guideline Statement

A Code of Conduct is a set of rules, which outline the acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour expected when staff and volunteers work with children or vulnerable adults within a Ministry or when visitors to the Ministry are in contact with children or vulnerable adults.

It is expected when a staff member or volunteer undertakes to work within an Edmund Rice Ministry, they are making a binding commitment to the values and enactment of the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice in their practices with children and vulnerable adults.

Where there is breach of the requirements of the Code of Conduct the line manager will assess if the breach has resulted in harm or risk of harm to a child or children. If there is assessed harm or risk of harm the line manager will direct immediate removal of an individual from service contact with children until an independent professional review is undertaken.

Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults - Policy Attachment			
Date Approved:	5 October 2018	Version:	1.1
Author:	Pauline Meemeduma	Author's Position:	Ministries Professional Practice Coordinator
Approval Body:	Oceania Leadership Team	File Ref:	OP1.5a
Date for Review:	October 2021	Page:	1 of 6
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The Code of Conduct is based upon the values derived from the Edmund Rice Charism, from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and from the UN Convention of People with a Disability.

Edmund Rice Ministries commit to service for children and vulnerable adults, as this reflects an actualisation of a belief about 'God's presence in all children and vulnerable adults', Ministry staff, volunteers and visitors commit to:

- The service organisation being child and vulnerable adult safe through:
 - *Zero tolerance* of activities which either impede the appropriate care of children or vulnerable adults or which result in children or vulnerable adult's abuse or risk of abuse.
 - Implementation of a *risk-management* approach to the delivery of services to reduce the likelihood of harm to children or vulnerable adults.
 - *Whole community* responsibility for the care, safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults.
 - *Children and vulnerable adults' rights* approach to Ministry service provision, which recognises the interests of children and vulnerable adults as separate from, yet actualised through family, community and society.
 - *Competency-based* approach to staff/volunteer recruitment, appointment, performance evaluation and performance monitoring.
 - *Capacity-building* approach to empowering local staff and communities to provide for and to strengthen the care, safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- Enhance the capacity of communities to ensure all children and vulnerable adults are free from abuse and exploitation.
- Respect the right of children and vulnerable adults to develop and fulfill their potential as unique individuals in a developmentally, culturally and socially appropriate care, safety and protection environment.
- Ensure that children and vulnerable adults' care, safety and protection needs are most effectively met through strengthened and empowered positive family/kin, community and national networks.

6: Code of Conduct Responsibilities

I Shall:

1. Respond to each child or vulnerable adult as a unique and possessing innate dignity
2. Have as my first priority the care, safety and protection needs of all children or vulnerable adults.

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3. Be alert to the vulnerability of certain groups of children or vulnerable adults or individual children or vulnerable adults to being isolated, bullied and hurt.
4. Interact with every child or vulnerable adult in a manner that demonstrates respect, dignity, integrity, empathy, understanding and patience.
5. Use positive reinforcement strategies of encouragement, praise and reward to support and guide children and vulnerable adults.
6. Model socially appropriate adult behaviour towards children and vulnerable adults that reflects the capacity to listen to, understand and be respectful towards others.
7. Ensure where there is physical contact with children or vulnerable adults, I will conduct myself in a manner that is caring and engaging but that is respectful of a child or vulnerable adult's physical, psychological and emotional well-being and is respectful of cultural traditions and understandings.
8. Physically restrain a child or vulnerable adult only when there exists a danger to the child or to other children or adults, and which follows the Oceania Province restraint guidelines.
9. Ensure when in the presence of a child or vulnerable adult the area is visible to other adults, or another adult is in physical proximity.
10. Maintain conditional confidentiality about information known about a child or a vulnerable adult.
11. Comply with the principles and standards of child and vulnerable adult protection laws.
12. Be vigilant and attentive to any harm towards a child or vulnerable adult through listening carefully to a child or vulnerable adult's possible disclosure of harm or through paying attention to any signs a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing harm or be at risk of harm.
13. Immediately report to a supervising manager any child or vulnerable adult maltreatment concerns or allegations in accordance with Ministry reporting guidelines and procedures.
14. Always be aware of my individual role as a staff member or volunteer to contribute toward the developmental care, safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults by fulfilling my contracted employment or volunteer or on-site volunteer duties.

I Shall Not:

15. Engage with or contribute toward involving children or vulnerable adults in any form of participation, active or passive, in sexual activities where the child is under the age of consent or the vulnerable adult cannot give empowered and informed consent

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16. Invite unaccompanied child (ren) or vulnerable adult(s) into my organisational residential accommodation unless there is immediate injury or risk to life
17. Sleep close to an unaccompanied child or vulnerable adult, unless absolutely necessary and if permission is obtained from a supervisor and where possible a supervising adult is present.
18. Utilise children or vulnerable adults for domestic labour (paid or unpaid), which interferes with their educational and recreational activities and places them at risk of injury or harm.
19. Take gifts/money/services from individuals receiving Ministry services as a condition of my fulfilling my Ministry duties.
20. Obtain photographic images that exploit or degrade children or vulnerable adults. [See Guideline on Taking and Use of Images]

7. Breaches of this Code of Conduct

Alleged breaches of this Code of Conduct by personnel will result in the person being stood down pending an investigation. Should an allegation be substantiated, irrespective of actions that might be taken by third parties, this can result in, but is not limited to disciplinary action, and/or dismissal.

In some States and Territories, notification to an external agency in some circumstances is mandatory, and depending upon the outcome of investigations and the decisions of these agencies, could result in criminal charges being laid.

8. Definition of Terms

Child- means a person under the age of 18 years.

Child Maltreatment- encompasses acts which result in the (1)abuse and the (2) neglect of children (World Health Organisation [W.H.O])-

Child Protection – refers to an area of service provision, which is aware of and responsive to the risks of children being harmed and how services [Government or Non-Government] may respond to these risks.

Children’s Services Standards Coordinator (CSSC) – this position within the Oceania Province of the Christian Brothers oversees children’s services standards and child protection responses within Ministry services. The position is intended to provide within the Province, professional independence and expertise when

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responding to child protection reporting, assessment and decision making, based upon professional practice standards and the best interests of the child.

Christian Brother – refers to a member of the Congregation of the Christian Brothers

Duty of Care – refers to the ethical principle as affirmed in common law, which requires individuals to act with an awareness of and responsiveness toward the care needs of another person [whether a child or adult].

Mandatory Reporting – refers to the requirements in certain national, state or territory jurisdiction, whereby all citizens or specifically identified professionals [doctors, teachers, social workers, nurses, psychologists] are required to report all ‘reasonable suspicion’ of child maltreatment or specifically identified acts of maltreatment.

Oceania Province- refers to the organisational body responsible for the standards of Ministry services for children.

Reporting Officer (RO) refers to the ‘on-site’ adult who has been delegated responsibility to receive initial notification of a Child Protection concern and who has undertaken training and passed the assessment requirement.

Staff- refers to all paid employees of Edmund Rice Ministries, which is inclusive of paid religious staff.

Statutory Child Welfare/Child Protection Department – refers to a Government mandated organisation, which has defined authority under legislation [Child Welfare Act], to provide for and respond to the care, safety and protection needs of children. This mandate is inclusive of working with children, their families, extended family and community.

Statutory Requirements- refer to the laws, which define the mandate of child welfare and protection within the jurisdiction and the identified responsibilities of designated professional groups and members of the community in relation to the response to child maltreatment allegations relating to a child’s well-being.

Volunteer - the term volunteer refers to all approved non-paid participants in Edmund Rice Ministries, which is inclusive of religious staff.

Vulnerable adult- is a person 18 years or older who does not have sufficient functioning capacity, either temporarily or permanently, to:

- Make decisions about and to direct the conduct of their own life in key

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areas of life functioning such as the provision of shelter, food, income access, medical treatment and social relationships

- Protect themselves from harm.

Adult vulnerability generally arises as a result of characteristics related to three areas:

- Perpetrator of the vulnerability (whether actual or alleged) – Intent/behaviours of another adult or child
- Victim of the vulnerability – awareness of and capacity to respond to actual or emerging vulnerability
- Environmental context of the vulnerability – organisational, social and family context of the actual or emerging vulnerability

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