CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CATECHISTS

ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY
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PREAMBLE

Catechists work with children in approximately 330 schools run by the NSW Department of Education and Training throughout the Archdiocese of Sydney.

This code of conduct (Code) applies to catechists teaching special religious education in NSW public schools across the Archdiocese. The Code seeks to raise awareness amongst catechists of their and the Archdiocese’s obligations under NSW child protection legislation. The Code also assists catechists to better understand and work within the acceptable boundaries of a teacher-student relationship.

Both catechists and catechist assistants are required to comply with this Code and all references to catechists in this Code are to be taken as references to both catechists and assistants.

The Archdiocese values catechist ministry highly. That ministry is:

“...a mission that transforms the ordinary values of the world. It grows slowly, from small beginnings, often unnoticed but always carried forward by the powerful Spirit of God. Its foundation is love: ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with your entire mind’; ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’ In fact, to live the reign of God is a commitment to a way of love. ‘I give you a new commandment; love one another; you must love one another just as I have loved you. It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognize you as my disciples.’

[Integrity in Ministry pg viii]"

Please Note: this Code combines key elements of the following documents:
1. Code of Conduct of the Department of Education and Training
   [Unique Identifier PD/2004/0020/V001 Implementation Date 15th June 2004.]
   [formulated by CCER and CEO Sydney.]
3. ‘Towards Healing’ [2000] and ‘Integrity in Ministry’ [June 2004].

The schools that you will teach in aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for each child entrusted to their care. You should carry out your ministry of special religious education in a way that helps schools to succeed in this aim.

You must understand and support the key principles of child protection legislation in NSW. Both you and the Archdiocese have obligations under that legislation. This Code will assist you to understand and meet your child protection responsibilities. The Code is also intended to reflect the principles of the schools in which you will teach and the Catholic Church community that you represent.

The Code will assist you to understand what will be appropriate conduct for your work in child related ministry. It will also help you assist your schools in achieving a safe and supportive environment for students, catechists and the broader community of the school.

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1 All references to child protection legislation in this Code are taken to be references to the following:
- Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW);
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 (NSW); and
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.
“...A code of conduct is not intended to restrict or stifle the conduct of those professionals to whom it applies. Rather, it is a set of behavioural standards to ensure that professionals themselves preserve their own dignity and respect the human dignity of all to whom they relate in the exercise of their profession....”

[Foreword: ‘Integrity in Ministry’ June 2004.]

You should speak to your school principal or your parish catechist coordinator and ask them for copies of any other policies or procedures you need to comply with. You will generally need to be aware of and comply with:

a) the privacy policies in place at your parish and the schools at which you teach;

b) any code of conduct and behaviour management or discipline policy of the schools at which you teach;

c) the occupational or workplace health and safety policy of your schools. Occupational health and safety issues such as classroom safety, for example electrical cables placed in inappropriate positions, are your responsibility as well as that of teachers and other paid employees of the school. This means that you would be required to report such a matter to the appropriate authority in the school; and

d) Any other relevant policies or procedures at the schools you teach.

GLOSSARY

School means services provided to children undertaken on school property and other school related activities such as school sport, excursions, camps, billeting.

Principal means the Principal or the Principal’s delegate.

Student means any child under the age of 18.
CODE OF ETHICS

1. Ethical principles upon which this Code is based are:

   Principle 1: commitment to the students

   As educators within the Catholic tradition, catechists believe that children and young people are, like ourselves, pilgrim people, making their journey through this life with a constant focus on the next. Catechists have a special responsibility to encourage each student to achieve his or her maximum potential. Catechists work to stimulate the spirit of enquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals and values and a sound relationship with God in the Church.

   Principle 2: commitment to parents

   As educators within the Catholic tradition, catechists know that children and young people are influenced by home, communities, and a society in which attitudes toward Christian values are often challenged. Parents and guardians, from whom children and young persons derive their values, entrust their children to schools to instruct, complement and intensify the education and formation begun in the home. As catechists we are called to assist these parents and guardians in fulfilling their responsibility for the Christian formation and education of their children.

   Principle 3: commitment to the community

   As educators within the Catholic tradition, catechists believe the school is both an agent for change and a preserver of basic values. Catechists consider that the students who attend NSW public schools are an integral part of the parish and so catechists have a vital role to play in preparing future citizens, parishioners, and civic and church leaders.

   Principle 4: commitment to sound educational practice

   As educators within the Catholic tradition, catechists strive for excellence with our students for their own good, and the good of our Church, nation and world. Catechists strive to create a Christian classroom environment which promotes sound moral values based upon Catholic beliefs and teachings. Through the catechists’ spirit of joy, enthusiasm and zest for life-long learning, and the strength of their own relationships with God, catechists encourage others to join them in the ministry of special religious education.
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CATECHISTS

1. Responsibilities of catechists

1.1.1 Appointment as a catechist

You have committed your time to minister religious education to children and young people. In so doing, you are assisting to protect and promote the Catholic tradition. Your generosity in giving your time and efforts to this cause is greatly appreciated by your parish and by the Archdiocese.

The recognition by our community that children and young people are vulnerable to harm and exploitation has led to the introduction of many laws that aim to protect them. Some of these laws require organisations working with children, including schools, to review the background of employees and volunteers that they engage to work with children.

Because you will be working with children, the parish priest who appoints you is required to comply with screening procedures before he appoints you to work with children. These screening procedures are required by law. You should not see these precautions as a criticism of you or as a suggestion that you are not an appropriate person to work with children. To the contrary, every person who works with children in a school is required to go through the same process regardless of their age or experience.

Generally, your parish priest will do the following before appointing you as a catechist:
- Meet with you personally to discuss your appointment as a catechist;
- Ask you to complete a ‘Prohibited Employment Declaration’; and
- Ask you to complete a ‘Catechist Appointment Form’ that will record some of your personal details including contact details, date of birth, any previous work as a catechist and the schools you will be working with as a catechist.

Once your parish priest has made a decision to appoint you as a catechist, the following will occur:
- Your parish priest will contact the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) to advise of your appointment and provide CCD with copies of the Prohibited Employment Declaration form and the Catechist Appointment Form;
- You will be given a copy of this code and asked to ensure that you have read and understood it and to indicate this by signing a form that certifies this; and
- CCD will arrange for a ‘Green Card’ to be issued to you for every year that you are a catechist.

The ‘Green Card’ authorises you to enter and teach at the schools where you will minister as a catechist. This card shows that you are an approved person to minister to children at the schools that are identified on the card. You should keep your ‘Green Card’ in a secure place and have it with you at all times when you are on school property.

From January 2006, your ‘Green Card’ must include your photograph. CCD will arrange for your photograph to be taken and for it to appear on your 2006 ‘Green Card’. Also from 2006, a new ‘Green Card’ will be issued to you every year that you are a catechist. CCD will take a new photograph of you for your Green Card every five years to ensure your photograph is current.

If you have any concerns about the appointment process or your ‘Green Card’, you should speak to your parish priest, your parish catechist coordinator or to the Director of CCD.
If you lose your ‘Green Card’ you should call CCD immediately on 02 9390 5122 and they will arrange for a replacement.

In addition to understanding this code, you will be required to attend child protection training conducted by CCD every one - two years. If you have any questions about your training requirements or training needs, you should call CCD on 02 9390 5122.

1.2 Responsibilities

As a catechist you have a responsibility to meet the high standards of behaviour required by your students’ families, the Catholic Church and the schools in which you minister.

The NSW Department of Education and Training has a statement of core values that applies in all NSW public schools. A copy of this statement, called “Values in NSW Schools”, is attached to this Code. You are expected to be aware of and support those core values in everything that you say and do while you are acting as a catechist in a NSW public school.

As a person engaged in ministry on behalf of your parish and the Archdiocese, you should also ensure that you do not do or say anything that is contrary to the teachings and values of the Catholic Church. If you have any questions about those teachings you should speak with your parish priest.

When you work as a catechist in a NSW public school, you must comply with all reasonable instructions from your school principal, their delegate or any other supervising teacher. You must also comply with all reasonable instructions from the parish priest, or his delegate, where those instructions relate to your work at the school.

You should take steps to ensure that you are aware of and comply with all the applicable policies and procedures that apply in the schools in which you work. You should ask the principal of each school, or their delegate, for copies of these documents. Most schools are likely to have policies and procedures on subjects such as appropriate conduct between teachers and students, privacy and safety.

The schools that you teach in must ensure the safety of students. As part of your work at any school, you are required to assist the school to take reasonable steps to protect students from any risk of injury. You must assist in this way by ensuring that when you are teaching the classroom environment is safe. To do this you would, for example, check that furniture is not stacked in an unsafe way, spills are cleaned up and that electrical cords and other hazards are not likely to trip students. Another way you can ensure you protect students from injury is to prevent them engaging in activities in which they or another person may be injured, for example running in a confined or slippery area or throwing objects to or at each other outside a supervised sporting context. Each school will have a policy that will explain what you should do to keep students safe.

2. Relationships

2.1 Interactions with students

As a catechist you hold a position of great responsibility. It is expected that as a representative of the Catholic faith, you will be caring and compassionate towards your students. In doing so however, you must set appropriate boundaries. Because you are in a position of authority over your students, your relationship with them must be appropriate.
Treat students with respect and care

You must always treat students with respect even when they behave in a way that is difficult or challenging. There is no place for sarcasm, derogatory remarks, offensive comments or any conduct that may result in emotional distress or psychological harm to a child.

Behaviour that may cause psychological harm to a student includes:

- targeted and ongoing criticism, belittling or teasing;
- excessive or unreasonable demands;
- hostility, verbal abuse, rejection or scapegoating; and
- using inappropriate locations or social isolation, outside of the school’s discipline policy, as punishment.

Treat students in a consistent manner

You should always try to treat students in a consistent way. This means that you should avoid favouritism or relationships with some students that are particularly close or ‘special’. All your classroom rules should apply to students equally and you should require all students to address you in the same way. As a general rule, you should try not to give any particular student a greater part of your attention than the other students, or spend ‘one on one time’ with any student, except where the student is a ‘special needs’ student or needs help with a particular task).

Equally, you must be as fair as possible when disciplining or correcting your students. As part of this, you should not judge or make assumptions based on a student’s past behaviour.

You are likely to be failing to treat your students in a consistent manner if you:

- give gifts to a child (for example giving a birthday gift to a particular student when this is not the practice with other students, or asking the student to keep the gift a secret from others);
- show special favours;
- allow a student to over-step rules that apply to other students, except where this is approved by the school because of that student’s special needs;
- assume that a student has acted in a particular way, for example that he or she disrupted a class by calling out aloud or throwing something, without having a clear and reasonable basis for that assumption; and
- allow there to be inconsistent consequences for students who do well or who misbehave.
Relationships with students and their families outside school hours

Keeping appropriate boundaries becomes particularly difficult if you interact with your students outside school hours. This is likely to happen if you are active in your parish and your students are from families that live in or close to your parish.

If you have contact with your students outside the school, this makes it more challenging to maintain boundaries of appropriate conduct with your students. The schools at which you teach will usually have policies and procedures in respect of any contact outside school hours. You should ensure you are aware of and comply with these.

In some circumstances, such as where you have an existing relationship with a student’s family, avoiding contact with that student and their family would be impractical and undesirable. If this happens, you should discuss this with the student and their family and ensure that they are comfortable with your relationship with them. If you have any concerns about maintaining appropriate boundaries with students and their families, you should discuss these with your parish catechist coordinator or the relevant school principal.

In most cases the following conduct will usually be inappropriate unless it occurs with the prior knowledge and consent of your student’s parent or guardian:

- visiting students at their home;
- inviting students to visit your home;
- making telephone calls of a personal nature to students;
- recording personal contact details for the student and their family;
- sending emails of a personal nature to students;
- having a student attend lessons one on one or otherwise spend time one on one outside class hours; and
- sending sms (text) messages to students.

Congratulating students

There will be times where you wish to congratulate a student. You should be consistent in congratulating your students and should review your school’s policy and procedures to ensure that your approach is approved school practice.

You should be conscious that your gestures to students may be open to scrutiny by others. More information to help you distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable physical contact is contained in Section 6 of the Code titled, ‘Physical Contact with Students’.

Transporting or driving students

Most schools will have a policy that addresses whether or not you are permitted to transport students and you must ensure that you comply with that policy. As a general rule, you should not drive students in your car unless you have permission from the parent or guardian of the student. If the student’s parent or guardian has agreed to an arrangement where you regularly transport the student, the school principal needs to be made aware of and give approval for this arrangement.
In an emergency, you should consider what is necessary and appropriate before transporting a student. You should make all reasonable attempts to advise the relevant parent or guardian and the school authorities before undertaking any journey. In cases of serious injury, it is usually preferable to wait for an ambulance.

If you are, in accordance with this Code and your school’s policies, to transport a student in your car, the recommended approach is to have the child travel in the back seat and for children who are old enough to do so to put on their own seatbelts (with you ensuring this has been done rather than doing it yourself). It may be more appropriate to keep the child in the front passenger seat if they are injured, distressed or unwell so that you can more easily monitor them.

**Being alone with students**

You should avoid, as far as is reasonable, situations where you are alone with a student. If, in the conduct of your duties, you are required to work one to one with a student, you must ensure you are aware of and comply with your school’s policy and procedure addressing these situations.

Similar considerations apply if for any reason, including the absence of other students, you are required to conduct a class involving a very small number of students (1-4 children). You should check your school’s policies for when this occurs and ensure you comply. If you have any questions about what to do if you are responsible for a very small number of students.

**Use of alcohol, tobacco and other substances**

You must take all reasonable steps to ensure that alcohol, tobacco or prohibited substances are not consumed by students on the school’s premises or at school functions. You must not give alcohol, tobacco or prohibited substances to students, nor encourage or condone students’ use of those substances.

Any consumption of alcohol by you at school, or while at school functions, must be in accordance with school policy. You must not enter school premises under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs. Administration of prescribed medications must also be in accordance with school policy.

Any questions that you have about the application of your school’s policy should be discussed with the school principal or their delegate.

**Sexual relationships with students**

You must not, under any circumstances, engage in intimate or sexual relationships with a student or engage in any conduct of a sexual nature with a student.
This rule will apply whether the relationship is heterosexual or homosexual, consensual or non-consensual or condoned by the student’s parents or caregivers. Your age or the age of the student involved is also irrelevant. In all cases where you engage in any kind of improper conduct of a sexual nature, the school or CCD (and possibly both) will be obliged to report this matter to the NSW Ombudsman and in most cases also to the NSW Police.

**Improper conduct of a sexual nature against a student includes sexual intercourse and any other form of sexual misconduct.**

**Sexual misconduct includes:**

- obscene language of a sexual nature;
- suggestive remarks or actions;
- jokes of a sexual nature;
- obscene gestures;
- unwarranted and inappropriate touching;
- sexual exhibitionism;
- undressing in front of students;
- requesting or watching students undress;
- personal correspondence with students in respect of your sexual feelings for the student;
- deliberate exposure of students to sexual behaviour of others, other than in the case of prescribed curriculum material in which sexual themes are contextual;
- possession, distribution or display of pornography;
- electronic transmission of messages or files which are sexually explicit, offensive or contain inappropriate jokes; and
- sending sms (text) messages, which are sexually explicit, offensive or contain inappropriate jokes.

You must be cautious of the content and context of your discussions with students:

**You should not:**

- make critical personal comments about a student, their family or their lifestyle choices;
- ask questions that probe a student’s sexuality or personal relationships;
- discuss personal details of your own lifestyle or that of others;
- disclose your personal contact details to students;
- discuss matters of a sexual nature other than as required by the school as part of the teaching curriculum.

If any student engages, or attempts to engage, in inappropriate behaviour of a sexual nature with you, you must discourage the student from this behaviour and then take immediate steps to report the behaviour to the school principal, or their delegate.

If a student makes inappropriate sexual comments or otherwise seeks to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour, this may show that the student is in need of advice or assistance. When a student engages in such conduct, you should make the school principal aware of this so that the appropriate support or counseling can be given to the student.
In summary:

**You should always try to ensure you do the following:**

- Students should be treated equally with no particular student singled out for particular attention whether positive or negative.
- Your language and behaviour must be acceptable at all times. You should also try to ensure the same of your students.
- Your standard of dress must be professional when on school property.
- You should strive to be equally available to all students.
- Personal feelings must not affect interactions with students.
- Interactions with a student which may be seen as demeaning or belittling are not acceptable.

### 2.2 What if you think there has been a breach of the Code?

You should always speak to the Director of CCD if you feel that there has been a breach of this Code or if you become aware of any behaviour towards students that you otherwise consider unacceptable. The Director will help you to decide how to act.

You must notify the school principal, or their delegate, immediately (at the latest within two days) if you think that a student at a school in which you teach, has been exposed to:

- any kind of sexual misconduct against them or in their presence (including exposure to comments of a sexual nature or sexual material such as pornography);
- physical assault or any other conduct causing physical harm including ill treatment or neglect; and
- behaviour that caused or was reasonably likely to cause them psychological harm.

You must also immediately notify the school principal, or their delegate, where you have heard from a third party, including another student, parent or teacher, that a student was subjected to any of this conduct.

If you become aware of what you think might be a sexual or other criminal offence against a student, you should notify this to the school principal, or their delegate. The school principal will ensure that the matter is reported to the NSW Police. If you are aware that the school has failed to, or elected not to, report a possible criminal offence you should personally report the matter to the NSW Police.

If you become aware of circumstances that may involve a student being at risk of harm either sexually, physically or psychologically, you should ensure that you notify the school principal, or their delegate. The school principal will take steps to ensure that the matter is reported to the Department of Community Services (DoCS) and, if possible, to remove the risk of harm to the student. If you are aware that the school has failed to, or elected not to, report that a student may be at risk you should personally report the matter to DoCS.

You should follow this procedure in circumstances where:

- you are concerned that another catechist or any other teacher has breached this Code or otherwise engaged in unacceptable conduct; or
- you are concerned that you may have breached this Code or otherwise engaged in unacceptable conduct.
Remember: it is not your responsibility to investigate allegations or suspicions of a criminal offence against a student or risk of harm to a student.

Conduct that is a breach of this code may also be a breach of the law. Where a catechist or other adult has acted inappropriately towards children, your school or the Director of CCD (or both) will usually have an obligation to report this to the NSW police and other NSW government agencies including the NSW Ombudsman and the Commission for Children and Young People.

3. Duty to protect students from risk of harm

Each school has a duty to take reasonable steps to prevent harm occurring to its students, employees and volunteers. All employees and volunteers are expected to assist to discharge this duty.

Obviously, as you are only on school property for a relatively short time each week and given that the school has the ultimate say and responsibility for the maintenance of the premises, there are limits to what you can do to protect your students from risk of harm. Your role will be to make sure you are aware of and comply with the school policy and procedures in relation to workplace health and safety and any other relevant policies. You should also take all reasonable steps to protect students from risk of harm during your time at the school.

You are expected to help the schools to maintain a positive, open and healthy workplace environment. Each volunteer has a significant role to play in achieving this. If you are not sure what is expected of you or are having difficulties you should talk with your parish catechist coordinator.

It will generally be the case that your school will have policies that detail how to supervise students in and outside the classroom and what to do if a student is injured or sick. Most schools will have a ‘sick bay’ or other place where you should send, or in more serious cases take, students who are sick. You should ensure that you are aware of those arrangements.

You will also need to ensure that you do the following:

- Always be punctual in attending to your lessons and other responsibilities.
- Always ensure that you advise the school principal if you cannot attend to your lessons or responsibilities. DO NOT arrange for a replacement catechist yourself. Give as much notice as you can so a replacement can be more easily found.
- Report all incidences of bullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour to the appropriate school authority.
- Attend to the needs of ill or injured students as required by the school’s policy. You should always notify the school principal, or their delegate if a student has suffered an injury or illness and advise them of any steps you took to help the student.
4. **Risk Management**

You should always think about risks to students or other persons while you are teaching at a school and take steps to minimise and/or remove those risks. For example you might:

- ensure that your classroom is set up in a safe way;
- think about any risks that might arise, if you have to take a class in an unfamiliar room for example, if there are heavy equipment or objects in the room or sinks or taps in the room; and
- ensure that students have hats and sunscreen if you are taking a lesson outside

You should always ask your school principal, or their delegate, whether any of the students in your class have special needs. This allows you to ensure that you take account of those students when conducting a risk assessment.

Schools may have their own risk management procedures; for example daily or more regular roll calls or procedures for assisting teachers to manage children with difficult or challenging behaviour. You must ensure that you are aware of and comply with those procedures.

5. **Student Management**

You must be familiar with your schools’ policies on matters such as student management, discipline and pastoral care.

Students who behave in a difficult or challenging way, should be referred to the appropriate person in accordance with the school’s policy and procedures. You should be particularly sure to do this where a student is behaving in an unsafe way. If the school has a plan to manage that student, you should act according to this plan.

If you ever feel unsafe or threatened during your time on school grounds, your school principal, or their delegate should be informed. You should ensure that you also advise your school or parish catechist coordinator. If you are uncomfortable with how a situation has been handled, you should speak to the Director of CCD.

**Corporal punishment is prohibited by law.** Corporal punishment involves the use of physical force to punish or correct a student unless that physical contact is reasonable and necessary for the protection of any person.
6. **Acceptable physical contact with students**

When physical contact with a student is a necessary part of the teaching/learning experience you must ensure that the contact is appropriate and acceptable for the task to be performed.

**You must not:**

- use an object, such as a ruler, book, duster, chalk or whiteboard marker to gain a child’s attention in a hostile or an inappropriate physical manner;
- hold back or restrain a student for any purpose other than where that student is causing harm to themselves or others;
- hit or kick a student;
- hug or hold a student (unless you are comforting the student or keeping them safe from harm);
- push, pull, shove, grab, pinch or poke a student;
- shake or throw a student;
- intimidate a student with words or acts;
- swear at a student;
- use sarcasm to humiliate a student;
- lock a student in a confined space;
- refuse to allow a child to use a bathroom or to have a drink or food as a means of punishment;
- make a student experience extremely unpleasant or uncomfortable conditions such as extreme temperatures or standing for an overly long period or time;
- act in a way that you would reasonably expect would frighten a student;
- act in a way that you would reasonably expect might make a student feel isolated or alienated; or
- expose a student to material that contains violent or inappropriate sexual messages or themes, or contains adult concepts or themes that are inappropriate for the student.

Physical contact with students which may be appropriate and acceptable includes:

- comforting an upset student (the level of acceptable contact will vary depending on the age of the child and the source of the distress for the child);
- guiding a student in a non-threatening manner;
- tapping a student on the shoulder to gain his/her attention after verbal requests were unsuccessful;
- protecting a student from imminent danger to themselves or to others;
- assessing a student who is injured or ill; and
- using drama or other activities as part of a lesson which may require the physical handling of a student to demonstrate a particular action or skill.
To be acceptable, physical contact with a student must be reasonable for the purpose of the discipline, management or care of the student. The contact must also be appropriate given the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the child.

If your school has a management plan in place for a student because of their special needs, any physical contact with the student should be consistent with that plan.

You should only use physical contact to contain and/or control the behaviour of students as a last resort to ensure safety and protection. Usually this will only be acceptable where another student or person is being harmed or is in immediate danger of being harmed.

Some examples of when it may be appropriate to use physical intervention as a last resort include preventing:

- a student attacking another student;
- a student attacking an adult;
- students fighting;
- a student causing injury to themselves or others;
- a student misusing dangerous materials, substances or objects.

As any physical intervention involves some risk of injury to the student, you must weigh this risk against the risks involved in failing to intervene.

7. **Confidentiality**

You should be aware of and follow the established lines of communication in the school.

Where matters arise in a school that involve a breach of this Code or any other child protection matter, you should keep all the details of that matter confidential except as requested by the school principal, or their delegate, or Director of CCD.

If you have any questions about your confidentiality obligations, you should discuss this with your school principal without discussing the matter with anyone else.

8. **Questions about this Code**

If there is any conflict between this Code of Conduct and any applicable legislation, the legislation will prevail.

If you have any questions about this Code then you should contact CCD on 02 9390 5122.
PROHIBITED EMPLOYMENT DECLARATION FORM

With the exception of where an order, from the Industrial Relations Commission or the Administrative Decisions Tribunal, declares that the Act does not apply to a particular person, the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 makes it an offence for a person convicted of a serious sex offence (a prohibited person) to apply for, undertake or remain in, child-related employment.

Section 5 of the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 defines a serious sex offence as an offence involving sexual activity or acts of indecency that was committed in NSW and that was punishable by penal servitude or imprisonment of 12 months or more, or, an offence involving sexual activity or acts of indecency that was committed elsewhere and that would have been an offence punishable by penal servitude or imprisonment for 12 months or more if it had been committed in NSW.

Child-related employment means any employment that primarily involves direct contact with children where that contact is not directly supervised. Section 1 of the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 specifies that child-related employment is employment:
- Involving the provision of child protection services
- In pre-schools, kindergartens and child care centres (including residential child care centres)
- In schools or other educational institutions (not including universities)
- In detention centres (within the meaning of the Child (Detention Centres) Act 1987)
- In refuges used by children
- In wards of public or private hospitals in which children are patients
- In clubs, associations or movements (including of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature) having a significant child membership
- In any religious organisation
- In any entertainment venues where the clientele is primarily children
- As a babysitter or childminder that is arranged by a commercial agency
- Involving fostering or other child care
- Involving regular provision of taxi services for the transport of children with a disability
- Involving the private tuition of children
- Involving the direct provision of health services
- Involving the provision of counselling or other support services for children
- On school buses
- At overnight camps for children.

Under this Act:
- It is an offence for a prohibited person to apply for, undertake or remain in child-related employment
- Employers must ask existing employees, both paid and unpaid, and preferred applicants for employment to declare whether they are a prohibited person or not
- All child-related employees must inform their employers if they are a “prohibited person” (someone who has been convicted of a serious sex offence) or remove themselves from child-related employment
- Penalties are imposed for non-compliance.

I am aware that I am ineligible to apply for, undertake or remain in, child-related employment if I have been convicted of a “serious sex offence” as defined in the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998.

I have read and understood the above information in relation to the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 and understand my responsibilities and obligations under this Act.

I declare that I AM NOT a person prohibited by the Act from seeking, undertaking, or remaining in child-related employment.

NAME: 
(Block letters)

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Note: You are advised to seek independent legal advice if you are unsure of your status as a prohibited person.

This form should be returned to the Parish Priest within one month of issuance, a copy of which will be forwarded to the Director of CCD Sydney.
SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHER’S ENGAGEMENT FORM

(For use in Catholic parishes in the Archdiocese of Sydney)

Name: __________________________

(Fr, Dr, Sr, Br, Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms)

Address:

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Telephone: __________________________

Responsible to: _________________________

(Name of Parish Priest / Administrator)

Parish: ________________________________

Schools in which I am authorised to teach:

________________________________________

________________________________________
VOLUNTEER TASKS:

• To assist Catholic students to seek, accept and deepen their understanding of the Christian message, according to their age and stage of development.

• To cooperate willingly with the parish priest and with those he has appointed to share his responsibilities.

• To develop your own knowledge of the Christian message and ability to present it as a genuinely educational activity using the authorised teaching materials of the parish.

• To be available to consult with parents/caregivers as partners in the religious education of the child.

• To maintain and develop relationships with fellow catechists and others in the educational ministry of the parish and the community school.

General Condition

It is essential that all volunteer catechists carry out their tasks in accordance with the principles and values of the Catholic Church and exercise due care for the safety and behaviour of students when they are teaching or supervising them and for giving the authorised teaching.

Volunteer Statement

I hereby state that:

I wish to volunteer my services on the above basis
to ______________________ Parish and have never been convicted for:

(a) an act of violence towards another person; or
(b) sexual assault; or
(c) any offence against a minor person; or
(d) provision of prohibited drugs.

I consent to allow such police checks as are necessary to verify this statement;
I understand that should I fail to meet any commitments as set out above I could be asked to withdraw from teaching SRE in schools.

Signature________________________________    Date_______________________

RECORDS

Original: To be held in Parish Office (or Presbytery)
Copy: To be retained by catechist (SRE teacher)
To be sent to the Director, CCD Sydney
NOTIFICATION TO PUBLIC SCHOOL OF
CATHOLIC SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS
AUTHORISED TO TEACH SRE

PARISH: ____________________________

PUBLIC SCHOOL: ____________________

To the Principal / SRE Coordinator

The following Catholic Special Religious Education Teachers have been authorised
to teach SRE in your school:

(List names)

To enable them to teach Special Religious Education, these persons have complied
with all relevant child protection and departmental requirements.

Signed

PARISH SEAL

__________________________________________________________________________

PARISH PRIEST