

Policy Procedure Name	Whistleblower
Policy No.	
Version No.	1.4
Date to be reviewed	26/06/2028
Applies to	All Staff
Major review frequency	<input type="checkbox"/> Annually <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 Yearly

## Purpose

Marymead CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn (MCCG), is committed to the principles of Catholic social teaching, including the dignity of the human person, the common good, solidarity and subsidiarity. These principles are expressed through our values of respect, integrity, excellence, care, compassion, and inclusivity.

In light of these particular values, MCCG strives to ensure the value of transparency, good governance and risk management, and the need to establish mechanisms for managing disclosures on a voluntary basis and to manage whistleblowing to best practice (with alignment to the Corporations Act).

There is no legal requirement for MCCG to have a Whistleblower Policy (as the organisation is not a public company, large proprietary company or a proprietary company that is the trustee of registrable superannuation entity), however MCCG wants to foster a culture that values ethical and compliant behaviour, and exemplifies an organisation that lives its mission, values, and code of conduct.

## Overview

Transparent whistleblower policies are essential to good risk management and corporate governance. They help uncover misconduct that may not otherwise be detected. Often, such wrongdoing only comes to light because of individuals (acting alone or together) who are prepared to disclose it, sometimes at great personal and financial risk.

To promote an open and transparent culture within Marymead CatholicCare Canberra Goulburn (MCCG), where current and former employees, volunteers, Board members, contractors and other stakeholders (including clients, residents, families, etc.), subsequently referred to as whistleblower(s), are encouraged to report an issue, if it is genuinely believed that wrongdoing has occurred, where the whistleblower policy is an important tool for helping MCCG to identify wrongdoing that may not be uncovered unless there is a safe and secure means for disclosure.

MCCG is committed to upholding the highest standards of safety and wellbeing for children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We operate in accordance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, and the NSW Child Safe Standards.

At MCCG, safeguarding is viewed as a collective responsibility. We are dedicated to creating and maintaining a child- and vulnerable adult-safe environment by embedding proactive strategies that prevent harm and promote wellbeing. All staff are expected to remain vigilant and are actively encouraged to report any concerns regarding safety or misconduct.

MCCG will protect individuals who, in good faith, report concerns regarding misconduct on a confidential or anonymous basis, without fear of reprisal, dismissal, or discriminatory treatment.

## Scope

The Whistleblower policy applies to MCCG. It does not apply to any other organisation we associate with, including organisations whose services are in some way linked to MCCG.

## Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy:

Term	Definition
<b>Catholic social teaching</b>	Catholic social teaching (CST) offers a way of Thinking, being, and seeing the world. It provides a vision for just society in which the dignity of all people are recognized, and those who are vulnerable are cared for. It consists of an interrelated body of Catholic social thought and principles which can be used to reflect on and guide how we relate to one another in our local and global communities.  Ref: <a href="https://cssa.org.au/resources/catholic-social-teaching/">https://cssa.org.au/resources/catholic-social-teaching/</a>
<b>Allegation</b>	A claim or assertion that someone has done something that could constitute misconduct.
<b>Investigation</b>	A search of evidence connecting or tending to connect a person with conduct that breaches the policies, procedures, values, standards, obligations or Code of Conduct and Ethics of MCCG
<b>Wrongdoing</b>	All MCCG personnel and stakeholders are encouraged to report any genuine concerns that they believe constitute a breach and/or unethical behaviour that could contravene

	MCCG Code of Conduct and Ethics, policies, legislation or standards of practice.
<b>Whistleblower</b>	<p>A whistleblower is an individual who wants to make a report in connection to alleged misconduct and where the whistleblower wishes to avail themselves of protection against reprisal for having made the report. This person(s) could be one of the following current or former:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board members.</li> <li>• MCCG employees.</li> <li>• Contractors.</li> <li>• Volunteers.</li> <li>• Other stakeholders including clients, residents, families, etc</li> </ul>

Primary Eligible Whistleblower Recipient (PEWR) – **DCEO - Lisa Higginson** **Secondary Eligible**

Whistleblower Recipient (SEWR) – **HR Director - Melissa Armstrong**

Contact at the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn - **MCCG Board Chair - Helen**

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A designated MCCG representative tasked with the responsibility of protecting and safeguarding the interests of whistleblowers within the meaning of this policy. The role is also a key contact for the External Whistleblower Reporting Service (RSM).

Appendix A contains email addresses and phone numbers of PEWR, SEWR, MCCG Board chair and archdioceses contacts.

## Policy Statement

MCCG is committed to creating and maintaining an open work environment where whistleblowers are able to raise concerns regarding actual or suspected unethical, unlawful or undesirable conduct.

MCCG's Board and Leadership Team recognise that any genuine commitment to detecting and preventing undesirable conduct must include a mechanism where concerns can be reported without fear of reprisal, retribution, or intimidation. This mechanism will assist in identifying undesirable behaviour within the workplace and ensure that an investigation is conducted where warranted.

A whistleblower procedure is an important tool for detecting misconduct and is essential to the achievement of good corporate governance. There are many benefits to an effective whistleblower regime at MCCG, including:

- Assisting with legislative and regulatory compliance.
- Improved financial management and budgetary responsibility.
- Improved work health and safety practices and compliance, as well as greater protections for MCCG program participants.
- Effective and efficient management.
- Improved organisational morale and culture.
- Confidence in the organisation's commitment to good corporate governance.
- Enabling a more transparent approach in investigation of potential misconduct.

MCCG is committed to the fostering of a culture that encourages lawful and ethical behaviour and transparency in service delivery to the community, as well as commercial, legal, and other stakeholder dealings. MCCG expects individuals to act in accordance with the law at all times, to behave professionally and to uphold MCCG's mission, values, and Code of Conduct, in undertaking their duties and activities on behalf of, or in association with MCCG.

## Procedures

## Purpose

The protection and respect afforded to whistleblowers is a significant commitment made by MCCG within the Whistleblower Policy and Procedure. MCCG is committed to enabling appropriate disclosures of matters properly characterised wrongdoing, to be made by genuine whistleblowers without fear of identification, retribution, or reprisal subject to the whistleblower having reasonable grounds to suspect that the misconduct has occurred. Whistleblowers have the choice to report internally within the organisation or through a third party.

The type of disclosable wrongdoing (where relevant to MCCG's operations and practices), could include (but not limited to the following):

- illegal conduct, such as theft, dealing in, or use of illicit drugs, violence or threatened violence, and criminal damage against property;
- fraud, money laundering or misappropriation of funds;
- offering or accepting a bribe;
- financial irregularities;
- failure to comply with, or breach of, legal or regulatory requirements; and
- engaging in or threatening to engage in detrimental conduct against a person who has made a disclosure or is believed or suspected to have made, or be planning to make, a disclosure.

This policy includes conduct that may not involve a contravention of a particular law. Information that indicates a significant risk to public safety or the stability of, or confidence in, the financial system is also a disclosable matter, even if it does not involve a breach of a particular law.

A whistleblower will be protected even if the disclosure turns out to be incorrect.

There are two types of reporting (notification) mechanisms:

Confidential reporting is when a whistleblower (which could be an employee or other stakeholder), provides information confidentially within the protections of the policy – this person would provide information about the potential wrongdoing, observed incident or accident as well as information about themselves. This would include things like their name, contact information and how they have come to know about this wrongdoing. But this identity information will remain confidential. A person cannot disclose the identity of a discloser or information that is likely to lead to the identification of the discloser (which they have obtained directly or indirectly because the discloser made a disclosure that qualifies for protection).

Anonymous reporting is when someone is a whistleblower, but we don't take any information from them. Nobody, not even the person investigating the incident, will know anything about the person's identity. There are limitations with anonymous reporting as it is more difficult for the investigator to assess the credibility of the complaint. The investigator must go out and look for additional sources. Thus, leads are harder to find and follow. The anonymous discloser can refuse to answer questions that they feel could reveal their identity at any time, including during follow-up conversations. In addition, it should include a suggestion that a discloser who wishes to remain anonymous should maintain ongoing two-way communication with MCCG, so MCCG can ask follow-up questions or provide feedback.

In accordance with the MCCG values, mission and policies, whistleblowers who make reports of misconduct or perceived misconduct, will be treated with dignity and respect, and provided protection against retribution and reprisal. MCCG is committed to ensuring that anyone who reports such conduct is not victimised, as a result of reporting suspected misconduct.

## Procedure

In the event that a whistleblower wants to notify a potential wrongdoing, the disclosure needs to be made to either an internal whistleblower recipient or an external and independent organisation that has been appointed by the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn. An external provider has been selected if the whistleblower is more comfortable to report externally. In both cases, depending on the type of notification, the issue will be treated confidentially or anonymously.

The organisation engaged by the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn to manage external notifications is called RSM. RSM's whistleblower reporting service is available twenty-four (24) hours per day, 365 days a year. Contact can be made with RSM by telephone, website, email and by mail (via a postal address), as stipulated in the details below:

- Telephone free-call number access – RSM's whistleblower reporting Helpline number answered by RSM's Fraud & Forensic Services team: 1800 270 748
- Website access - RSM's website whistleblower reporting:  
<https://www.rsm.global/australia/WBreporting>
- Email access - RSM's whistleblower reporting email address:  
[RSMHelpline@rsm.com.au](mailto:RSMHelpline@rsm.com.au)
  - Ensure that the email makes a clear reference for the contact to be directed To the National Head of Fraud & Forensic Services, RSM Australia
- Physical mail - A postal address for whistleblower reporting to RSM Australia, any of the following options will be acceptable:
  - To the National Head of Fraud & Forensic Services RSM Australia Equinox Building 4, Level 2, 70 Kent Street, Deakin ACT 2600.
  - To the National Head of Fraud & Forensic Services RSM Australia 143 Bourke Street, Goulburn NSW 2580.

- To the National Head of Fraud & Forensic Services RSM Australia 55 Berry Street, Wagga Wagga NSW 2650.
- To the National Head of Fraud & Forensic Services RSM Australia David Street Chambers, 564 David Street, Albury NSW 2640.

### **Investigation and Reporting**

All reports of misconduct made to RSM will be treated seriously and will be the subject of a thorough investigation with the objective of locating evidence that either substantiates the allegation of misconduct, or refutes the claims made by the whistleblower.

The external report will be prepared by RSM will be provided to one of the above two (2) employees of MCCG (i.e. the PEWR or SEWR).

Approval to conduct the investigation will be granted by MCCG where RSM will provide an overview of the nature of the investigation and the process it will deploy to investigate. The investigation process is as follows:

1. RSM will conduct the investigation upon approval from MCCG PEWR/CEO with an overview provided to the PEWR/CEO of the nature of the investigation and the processes deployed to investigate the matter, this includes:
  - a. the nature and scope of the investigation;
  - b. the person(s) within and/or outside the entity that should lead the investigation;
  - c. the nature of any technical, financial or legal advice that may be required to support the investigation; and
  - d. the timeframe for the investigation.
2. A nominated person (which will be either the PEWR or SEWR) will inform the whistleblower of the process and how the investigation will proceed.
3. RSM will forward the report to PEWR/CEO, this will depend on the nature of the whistleblower notification. In addition, the information may be shared with the Critical Incident Committee and Risk and Audit Board Committee, depending on the nature of the incident.
4. The Board will be notified of the report.

The PEWR/CEO will determine the appropriate response, including addressing any notifiable incidents with relevant agencies. This will include addressing any unacceptable conduct and taking remedial action to prevent any future occurrences of the same conduct. The Critical Incident Committee will be convened to review practice and identify areas for improvement and policy change.

Where issues of discipline arise, the response will be in line with the normal disciplinary processes (refer to the MCCG Code of Conduct). MCCG may seek advice from the Catholic Commission for Employment (CCER) or their suite of lawyers. Where allegations of misconduct cannot be substantiated, that person(s) will be advised accordingly and will be entitled to continue in their role as if the allegation had not been made.

Depending on the type of wrongdoing, MCCG might need to notify government agencies or other organisations that may have been impacted.

### **Dealing with whistleblowers**

**Confidentiality and Anonymity:** Depending on the notification of wrongdoing (confidentially or anonymously) requested, the identity of the whistleblower will be kept strictly confidential or will remain anonymous by RSM, Chair of the Board, MCCG employees and the contact representative at the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, involved in the whistleblowing process as described in this procedure unless:

- The person making the report consents to disclosure of identity.
- The disclosure is required by law.
- The disclosure is necessary to present or lessen threat to a person's health or safety.
- It is necessary to protect or enforce MCCG's legal rights or interests.
- It is necessary to defend any claims.

**Protection:** A whistleblower that reports matters in good faith and provided they have not been involved in the misconduct reported, will not be penalised or personally disadvantaged because they have reported a matter.

MCCG will not tolerate any instances of whistleblowers being:

- Dismissed.
- Demoted.
- Subjected to any form of harassment and persecuted.
- Discriminated against.
- Threatened.

A whistleblower who believes they or their family have been the victim of any of the above, should immediately report the matter to the PEWR, SEWR, or Contact Representative at the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, or in severe cases the Police.

Any current or former employee, volunteer, Board member, contractor or other stakeholder who are found to have dismissed, demoted, harassed, or discriminated against a whistleblower by reason of their making allegations, will be subject to disciplinary measures, including dismissal (where appropriate). A whistleblower who has been involved in the reported misconduct may be provided with immunity or due consideration from MCCG initiated disciplinary proceedings, by agreement with MCCG. MCCG has no power to provide immunity from criminal prosecution.

**Communication:** The whistleblower will, where possible, be kept informed of the outcome of the investigation into their report, subject to privacy and confidentiality considerations. All whistleblowers must maintain confidentiality of all such reports and not disclose details to any person.

**Support:** The whistleblower will be supported through various mechanisms within MCCG, including the roles of the Chair, PEWR, SEWR or the contact at the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn or by the use of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services. Other support

mechanisms could include:

- strategies to help a discloser minimise and manage stress, time or performance impacts, or other challenges resulting from the disclosure or its investigation;
- actions for protecting a discloser from risk of detriment—for example, MCCG could allow the discloser to perform their duties from another location, reassign the discloser to another role at the same level, make other modifications to the discloser’s workplace or the way they perform their work duties, or reassign or relocate other staff involved in the disclosable matter;
- processes for ensuring that management are aware of their responsibilities to maintain the confidentiality of a disclosure, address the risks of isolation or harassment, manage conflicts, and ensure fairness when managing the performance of, or taking other management action relating to, a discloser;
- procedures on how a discloser can lodge a complaint if they have suffered detriment, and the actions MCCG may take in response to such complaints (e.g. the complaint could be investigated as a separate matter by an officer who is not involved in dealing with disclosures and the investigation findings will be provided to the board or audit or risk committee); and
- interventions for protecting a discloser if detriment has already occurred—for example, MCCG could investigate and address the detrimental conduct, such as by taking disciplinary action, or the entity could allow the discloser to take extended leave, develop a career development plan for the discloser that includes new training and career opportunities, or offer compensation or other remedies.

**False Reports:** Where it is established that the whistleblower is not acting in good faith or has made a false report of misconduct (including where the allegation has been made maliciously, vexatiously or without any basis), they could be the subject of disciplinary proceedings, including dismissal (where appropriate). This will be determined by the investigation that will be undertaken by RSM.

Whilst not intending to discourage whistleblowers from reporting matters of genuine concern, whistleblowers must ensure as far as possible, that reports are factually accurate, complete, from firsthand knowledge, presented in an unbiased fashion (and any potential bias from the whistleblower is disclosed) and without material omission.

**Document Retention and Confidentiality:** All information, documents, records and reports relating to an investigation of reported misconduct must be stored confidentially and retained in an appropriate and secure manner, separate to personnel files. MCCG securely stores its information and takes seriously its obligations in meeting requirements of the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

**Complaints and Grievances:** MCCG has a Complaints Policy and Procedure which provides a formal response on how MCCG will manage and address the complaint. If the complaint or grievance has not been managed to the satisfaction of the whistleblower, then the following organisations can be contacted:

- Australia Human Rights Commission – can assist with resolving human rights concerns 1300 369 711
- Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, ACT – works to resolve complaints and promotes rights – 02 6205-2222
- Head of Agency – Contact the Archbishop of Canberra & Goulburn (or his delegate the Vicar General) on 02 6239-9811 or via email on [archbishop@cg.org.au](mailto:archbishop@cg.org.au) to discuss concerns relating to misconduct within MCCG
- Institute of Professional Standards and Safeguarding (IPSS) - has been established by the Archdiocese to handle allegations about employees misconduct towards children or vulnerable people on 02 6239-9806 or via email at [IPSS@cg.org.au](mailto:IPSS@cg.org.au)
- Human Services Registrar, Community Services Directorate, ACT – provides responsive regulation of service providers – 02 6207-5474

- Fair Work Australia – provides free workplace relations advice to employees – 1300 845 036
- ACT Police – 13 14 44

## Responsibilities

The following persons have responsibilities with respect to this policy:

Person or Group	Role
<b>Lisa Higginson</b>	Is the owner of this policy
<b>Leadership Team</b>	Is responsible for the implementation and communication of this Policy
<b>All Staff</b>	Are responsible for ensuring adherence to this Policy.

## References

External References	
<b>Standards and Guidelines and References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACNC Governance Standards</li> <li>• Aged Care Quality Standards, July 2019</li> <li>• AS8004-2003 Corporate Governance – Whistleblower Programs</li> <li>• Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC) Governance Standards</li> <li>• National Principles for Child Safe Organisations</li> <li>• ACT Child Safe Standards</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Catholic Safeguarding Standards</li> <li>• NSW Child Safe Standards</li> <li>• Institute of Professional Standards and Safeguarding (IPSS) MOU</li> <li>• ISO/IEC 27001: Information Security Management.</li> <li>• National Regulatory System - Community Housing, National Regulatory Code - January</li> <li>• 2014 Version 1.0</li> <li>• National Standards for Disability Services, DSS 1504.02.15 — Version 0.1. December 2013</li> <li>• National Standards for Mental Health Services, 2010</li> <li>• NDIS Code of Conduct: Guidance for Service Providers (March 2019)</li> <li>• NDIS Code of Conduct: Guidance for Workers (March 2019)</li> <li>• NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (Code of Conduct) Rules 2018 (Cth)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Legislation or Other Requirements</b></p>	<p><b>Key Legislation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)</li> <li>• Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)</li> <li>• Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)</li> <li>• Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)</li> <li>• Children and Young People Act 1999 (ACT)</li> <li>• Children and Young Persons Act 1998 (NSW)</li> <li>• Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)</li> <li>• Disability Discrimination Act 1992(Cth)</li> <li>• Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)</li> <li>• Ombudsman Act 1989 (ACT)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)</li> <li>• Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</li> <li>• Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</li> <li>• Reportable Conduct and Information Sharing Legislation Amendment Act 2016 (ACT)</li> <li>• Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</li> <li>• Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (ACT).</li> <li>• Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Other Legislation</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
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## Internal References

<p><b>Related Policies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MCCG Child Safe Code of Conduct</li> <li>• MCCG Code of Conduct</li> <li>• MCCG Code of Ethical and Proper Practice (Board Code of Conduct)</li> <li>• MCCG Complaints Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• MCCG Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• MCCG Induction Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• MCCG Incident Report Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• MCCG Employee Confidentiality Agreement</li> <li>• MCCG Governance Manual</li> <li>• MCCG Human Rights Policy</li> <li>• MCCG Risk Management Framework</li> <li>• MCCG Risk Management Policy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Forms, Record</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MCCG Complaints &amp; Feedback Register</li> </ul>

**Keeping or Other Organisational Documents**

- MCCG Complaints Form
- MCCG Critical Incident Forms
- MCCG Investigations Records and Reports
- MCCG Management Response to Complaint Form
- MCCG reports to the Institute of Professional Standards and Safeguarding (IPSS).

**Contractual References**

**Contractual Obligations**

- As per contracts relating to notifiable incidents.

**Version History**

Version	Approved by	Revision Date	Description of Change	Author
1.3	Board	16/05/2024	Annual review	Lisa Higginson
1.4	Board	10.06.2025	Annual Review	Lisa Higginson

**Authorisation**

***Marymead CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn Board Authorisation***



## Appendix A:

### Internal Whistleblower Recipient Contacts are as follows:

#### **Primary Eligible Whistleblower Recipient (PEWR):** Lisa Higginson

Deputy CEO, MCCG

0407 107 595 (mobile) and 02 6295 4300 (work)

PO Box 3167 Manuka ACT 2603

[lisa.higginson@mccg.org.au](mailto:lisa.higginson@mccg.org.au)

#### **Secondary Eligible Whistleblower Recipient (SEWR):** Melissa Armstrong

Director – People & Culture, MCCG

0414 587 176 (mobile) and 02 6295 4311 (work)

PO Box 3167 Manuka ACT 2603

[melissa.armstrong@mccg.org.au](mailto:melissa.armstrong@mccg.org.au)

#### **Board Contact:**

Helen Delahunty

Chair, Marymead CatholicCare Board

0409 220 369 (mobile) 02 6239 9800 (work)

55 Franklin St Manuka, ACT 2603, Australia. GPO Box 3089, Canberra ACT 2601

[Helen.Delahunty@cg.org.au](mailto:Helen.Delahunty@cg.org.au)

#### **Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Contact:**

Maria Hicks

Institute for Professional Standards and Safeguarding 02 6239 9806 (work)

5 Franklin St Forrest, ACT 2603, Australia. GPO Box 3089, Canberra ACT 2601

[Maria.Hicks@cg.org.au](mailto:Maria.Hicks@cg.org.au)



## Appendix B:

### Whistleblower Flowchart

In the event a Whistleblower wants to notify a potential wrongdoing, this simple flowchart is to help guide you.

