

ACU Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Commitment Statement

Australian Catholic University (ACU) is actively committed to the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of children, young people and adults at risk. We are committed to sustaining a culture in which the safeguarding of those with whom we work, teach, engage and minister to is central and embedded in our policies, procedures, practices and Code of Behaviour.

ACU respects the courage, resilience and strength of victim-survivors of abuse. ACU recognises that the protection of children, young people and adults at risk is a shared responsibility. We wish to continue to play an active part in acknowledging past abuse while creating environments in which children, young people, and adults at risk are safe, protected from harm, and given opportunities to heal and grow.

At ACU we are founded on a long history of commitment to truth, service, and wellbeing. These values help guide our actions in the protection of children, young people and adults and risk both within and outside the ACU community. We are committed to creating educational environments in which children, young people and adults at risk are protected, respected, and feel safe. We are dedicated to providing opportunities for children, young people and adults at risk to have a voice and be heard.

ACU recognises its strengths and responsibility in equipping its students to enter a broad range of disciplines, sectors, industries, and workplaces. ACU provides rigorous, evidence-informed, and person-centred learning opportunities to ensure that students entering child-focused settings understand the nature of child abuse and how they can play a role in protecting children from harm.

Through our dedicated research centre, the Institute of Child Protection Studies (ICPS), we actively seek to build evidence on the causes and nature of child abuse and neglect and how to best prevent and respond to maltreatment. Since its establishment in 2005, the ICPS has conducted high quality research, evaluation, training and community education, and advocacy and policy development, and has developed significant expertise in efforts to protect children and young people. This knowledge and expertise is shared with our students, staff and the wider community.

ACU does not tolerate the abuse and exploitation of children, young people and adults at risk and takes active steps to identify and respond to all safety and child protection concerns. Anyone who discloses to ACU a suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or past abuse of a child, will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with our legal obligations and our own Critical Incident Management Policy.

ACU's Safeguarding Children Capability Framework outlines ACU's approach to providing a safe environment for children, young people and adults at risk while complying with the National Standards for Child Safe Organisations and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. This framework recognises that it is our collective responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing of all children, young people, and adults at risk.

ACU's Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure sets out how ACU prevents risks to children, young people and adults at risk and aspires to build a strong culture of safeguarding. All staff, students and volunteers are expected to follow the Policy and Procedure and contribute to the culture of care and protection of all children, young people, and adults at risk.

We encourage open communication, and we listen to the voices of our students and our community as we constantly strive to remain vigilant and make improvements.