

If you, or someone that you know, has been the victim of abuse by Church personnel you should **report the matter directly to the police** for investigation. Alternatively, you can contact your local Church Authority or the Queensland Professional Standards Office who will assist you to report the matter to the police.

If you choose not to report the matter to the police you may wish to consider entering the Towards Healing process.

Towards Healing was established in 1996 and is a process offered by the Catholic Church to those who has been abused by a priest, religious or other Church personnel including employees and volunteers appointed to positions of pastoral care on behalf of the Church. Towards Healing also formalises the Church's principles and procedures for responding to complaints of abuse.

The Queensland Professional Standards Office is responsible for managing the Towards Healing process. The Office is independent of Church Authorities, and a neutral party, which ensures that proper processes are followed, and the matter is resolved as quickly as is possible in the circumstances. The Professional Standards Office is committed to making balanced and well-informed decisions and will manage the process fairly and impartially.

You Can Contact the Queensland Professional Standards Office By:

Email

psqld@catholic.net.au

Phone

1800 337 928 (free call - Qld callers only)
(07) 3336 9474 (interstate callers)

Post

PO Box 3264
Brisbane Qld 4001

Office hours 9.00am to 4.00pm
Monday to Friday (excepting public holidays).

You may also contact your local Church representative who is required to refer the matter to his or her Church Authority and/or the Professional Standards Office.

Website

For more information on the Queensland Professional Standards Office or the Towards Healing process go to the Professional Standards website at www.psqld.catholic.net.au

All grievances or complaints against Church personnel that may amount to a criminal offence should be reported directly to the police for investigation.



Professional Standards Office

Catholic Church Queensland

'Professional standards' are the qualities essential for the ethical and safe practice of pastoral ministry.

(Towards Healing protocol – Definitions)



Our Role

The role of the Professional Standards Office is to assist the Catholic Church in Queensland to implement and continuously improve safe and ethical practices and respond appropriately to incidents of abuse and misconduct.

Our Functions

The functions of the Professional Standards Office are:

- To assist Church Authorities to develop, implement and continually improve safe and ethical practices to reduce incidents of abuse and misconduct by Church personnel.
- To assist Church Authorities respond appropriately to incidents of abuse or misconduct committed by Church personnel.
- To assist complainants and Church Authorities to manage and resolve complaints against Church personnel.

Our Commitment

The Professional Standards Office will provide stewardship in our approach embedding safe and ethical practices, responding to incidents of abuse and misconduct and managing complaints to resolution.

The Professional Standards Office will provide a professional, fair and impartial case management service for the resolution of complaints of abuse and misconduct.

The Professional Standards Office will be responsive to incidents and events when notified and provide assistance where possible.

The Professional Standards Office will work in partnership and collaboration with Church Authorities in implementing and improving safe and ethical practices, responding to incidents of abuse and misconduct and managing complaints to resolution.

Governance

The Professional Standards Office is overviewed by and reports to a Professional Standards Liaison Committee established by the representatives of the Dioceses and Religious Orders of Queensland on behalf of the Conference of Queensland Bishops and the Catholic Religious Australia (Queensland).

Why Should You Complain?

Anyone can make a complaint about how the Church operates and how its personnel conduct themselves. Only by raising grievances can the Church address these issues. To make a complaint, you can take it up with your local Church representative or contact the Professional Standards Office.

Contact Your Local Church representative

Bringing your grievance to the attention of your local Church representative is often the quickest and easiest way to resolve the problem. Think about what the problem is and what you would like to happen. Be realistic and offer constructive suggestions to resolve the issue. Raising your concerns with the representative directly helps to maintain a good relationship and may identify ways they can improve things.

Make a Formal Complaint

You may decide to direct your grievance to the relevant Church Authority who is responsible for the situation or particular Church personnel. This may be a Director, Institutional Leader or Bishop. You may wish to involve a support person.

Making an Abuse Complaint

The Catholic Church in Australia, acknowledges with deep sadness and regret that a number of clergy and religious and other Church personnel have abused children, young people and adults who have been in their pastoral care. The Church is committed to offering whatever healing is possible to victims of abuse and in preventing abuse in the future.