



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL) Safeguarding Audit FAQs



**Leadership, monitoring
and improvement**

STANDARDS 1, 9



**Engaging with children, adults,
families and communities**

STANDARDS 2, 3, 4



**Right people, right role,
right knowledge**

STANDARDS 5, 7



**Systems, policies
and procedures**

STANDARDS 6, 8, 10

Source: adapted from Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd,
National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, 2nd edn, 2022, p. 7.

Who is to be audited?

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne inclusive of the Archdiocesan offices, parishes, agencies and entities are subject to the ACSL Audit. Schools are not included in this audit as they are under the governance of Melbourne Archdiocesan Catholic Schools (MACS).

How does this audit fit in with the Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool?

The only audit tool that parishes need to complete, is the [Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool](#). It is an ongoing, annual requirement of all parishes, that they complete and update their Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool each year and share this with their regional Safeguarding Officer. Using the Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool, will ensure that parishes are providing a 'moment in time' snapshot of their parish's safeguarding implementation. It is recommended that at the end of each year, parishes might like to archive a copy so that they can see what has been completed in that previous year, enabling them to continue to develop where they can in the next year.

When will parishes be notified if they are selected for the audit?

ACSL has advised that those parishes who are to be selected for the audit will be formally notified in early August 2025. Once this announcement has been made, further information sessions will be organised for selected parishes.

How is the audit conducted at a parish level?

Parishes selected for the audit will be required to submit a completed Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool to the Safeguarding Unit by the 29 August, 2025. The Safeguarding Unit will provide this to ACSL for a desktop review, in preparation for a parish visit. During the parish visit, the auditors may conduct interviews and meetings with key personnel, inclusive of clergy, paid personnel and volunteers. This may include the parish priest, chair of parish councils and representatives from parish ministry groups. Key documents pertinent to safeguarding will be reviewed and a tour of the parish site will occur.

What is the timeframe for the audit?

29 July – General Information Session conducted

4 August – Selected parishes and ministries will be advised by ACSL

28 August – Information session with ACSL via Zoom for selected parishes

29 August - Parish Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tools for those parishes selected for the audit, to be submitted to the Safeguarding Unit

1 September - Archdiocesan Business Units Self-Assessments to be submitted to the Safeguarding Unit

15 September – Archdiocesan Self-Assessment Tool to be submitted to ACSL by the Safeguarding Unit

16 September – ACSL commences desktop audit of Self-Assessments submitted.

2 October – ACSL meeting with Archbishop Comensoli and leadership team

6 October – Fieldwork (visits of selected parishes and Archdiocesan Offices) commences for 2 weeks

7 November - ACSL meeting with Archbishop to discuss audit findings

20 November - Final audit report publicly released

What are the expectations for Safeguarding Committees?

During the fieldwork or parish visit from the Auditors, Safeguarding Committee members would be expected to participate in a meeting with the Auditors. Questions posed might be in relation to their communication and reporting to parish leadership councils, involvement in risk assessments for ministries and event, safeguarding priorities at the parish, understanding of their parish community requirements for inclusion and diversity etc. A tour of the parish grounds and facilities may also occur with the Safeguarding Committee members to discuss the physical environment of the parish and anything that might be affecting safeguarding implementation.

What will be the time commitment to be part of the actual audit process?

Apart from the time taken to update your Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool and share it with the Safeguarding Unit, the fieldwork or parish visit is expected to take a few hours over one day.

What are some examples of the documentation that parishes might need to produce, as evidence of compliance?

The Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool is a living document, meaning it should be continuously updated and submitted annually to your regional safeguarding officer. The Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool is a holistic resource which shows how a parish is complying with the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Safeguarding Children and Young People framework which embodies legal, moral and theological requirements and therefore can be provided in an audit at any point by insurers, by the Children's Commissioner's Office or in this case, by ACSL.

Some examples of specific evidence that may be audited and referenced in a Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool include:

- Code of Conduct, WWC check and National Police Check registers
- ACMR checking
- Induction, training and supervision registers
- Sample of risk assessments and reporting systems
- Safeguarding role descriptions
- Parish leadership and Safeguarding Committee minutes
- Safety plans in place
- Sacristy sign in/out registers
- Safeguarding signage, CCTV, website, social media.

Will I be required to attend any fieldwork discussions with ACSL?

Yes. ACSL will indicate prior to their parish visit, who they would like to have a meeting with e.g parish priest, safeguarding committee members, chair of parish councils and representatives from parish ministry groups. If for any reason these meetings are unable to occur at the scheduled time of the parish visit, another arrangement will be made.

Are the current parish systems e.g. PACEM, adequate as registers for documentation?

Yes

Will audit reports be published?

An overall Archdiocesan audit report will be made publicly available by ACSL. The anticipated timeline for this is the 20 November, 2025.

After the audit will there be annual or regular check ups at a parish level?

After the audit report is finalised, ACSL will provide feedback to the parishes.

Each year after the audit ACSL will contact the Archbishop to follow up on any of the recommendations that were made in the audit report.

The parishes will also be supported by the business units in fulfilling the audit's recommendations in preparation for the next audit and to continue our commitment to Safeguarding and continuous improvement.

Does the parish get a certificate for completing the audit?

A certificate is provided to the Archdiocese by ACSL upon completion of the audit. The Archdiocese will consult with ACSL to determine how best to acknowledge those parishes who participated in the audit process.

Is an audit from the State Government regulator – CCYP, likely to occur?

Yes. We are aware that the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) are keen to see the findings for the ACSL audit so that they can in turn audit the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. We are yet to be informed what this will look like, but the CCYP have been reaching out to individual parishes already.

There is no greater time than now to undertake a robust audit process to highlight the significant work that the Catholic Church has undertaken, whilst identifying areas for improvement to help guide our practises into the future to ensure that everyone who comes into contact with our Church experiences a joyful and safe experience.