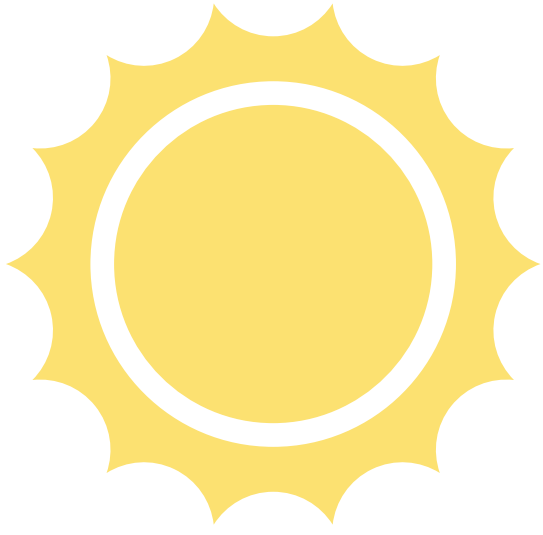


# Rights of the Child Framework

Diocese of Broken Bay



CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF  
BROKEN BAY



# Rights of the Child Framework Diocese of Broken Bay

Dear sisters and brothers,

Over the last number of years, our society has undergone some very positive change in respect to recognising the voice, the rights and the protection of our children. Legislation at the service of safeguarding our children is now well developed.

The Diocese of Broken Bay is committed to ensuring that all our people are educated and trained in their obligations and accountability in this regard. This includes our clergy and those with responsibility for leadership in ministry, our teachers and school staff, our CatholicCare personnel and all those in the community of the Church.

Upholding and protecting the dignity of children who have been made in the image of God is foundational to our faith, and not simply a matter of civil compliance.

As disciples of the Risen Lord we commit ourselves to giving witness to the life of Jesus Christ in our world today and recognising the face of Christ in the most vulnerable.

It is the Spirit of God who allows us to know our true identity in Christ and calls us to grow in greater likeness with him. The Spirit is gifted to us in various ways so that we might live fully with the dignity that is ours in God, and be led in the way of Jesus, which is given particular expression in the Beatitudes.

In this Diocesan Framework we have profiled the Rights of the Child formulated by the UN Convention and by the 2019 Children's Report of the Australian Human Rights Commission. We have situated these rights along with the spiritual rights our children enjoy in the first place as children of God. In so doing, our hope is that our children grow not only with the acknowledgement of the rights respected them by society, but with the awareness of their God-given rights as well.

From our Christian understanding, rights must always be understood with responsibilities. To enjoy a right is also to exercise a responsibility.

Let us therefore value and affirm the voices of our children in the way that God intended. As our children grow, may their voices always be at the service of others, contributing to the formation of a society in which human flourishing is possible.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ *Anthony Randazzo*

**Most Rev Anthony Randazzo DD, JCL**  
Bishop of Broken Bay  
*September 2020*



# Introduction

The Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay (Diocese) recognises Australia's obligations as a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Religious leaders and faith-based organisations such as those associated with the Diocese are in a unique position to champion children's rights, asserting their moral authority to make a difference in children's lives.

The Diocese's commitment to the rights of children is underscored by its faith in Jesus Christ who teaches the fundamental sanctity of each human person. This extraordinary faith embraces the virtues of compassion, solidarity and justice. All of which can help to bridge differences, foster dialogue and influence positive social and behavioral change.

The Diocese has written this Rights of the Child Framework (Framework) to cement its commitment to engage with children and safeguard the rights of children and protect them from harm. The Framework encourages members of congregations, schools and services, as well as families in understanding the minimum standards for the treatment of children and how child rights can make a difference to the life of a child.

This Framework also seeks to influence the Diocese's culture associated with its governance and leadership. Child rights programming can impact the actions and decisions of leaders when addressing policies, procedures and services.

The Framework incorporates the following Rights of the Child. They have been adopted and modified from the child friendly version of the Children's Rights Report 2019 which states that children living in Australia have the right to:

- 1. Be treated fairly and equally.**
- 2. Voice their thoughts when decisions are being made about them.**
- 3. Live and grow in a healthy and clean environment.**
- 4. Find out information and express themselves.**
- 5. Be protected, no matter their ability, language, belief or who they are with.**
- 6. A safe and loving home with clothes to wear and food to eat.**
- 7. Privacy to enjoy and protect their life story.**
- 8. Go to school and receive an education.**
- 9. Know who they are and where they come from.**

It is the responsibility of all adults to let children know and make possible their right to be happy, healthy, safe online and in real-life interaction, have access to information, to play, to learn, to have a voice, a home, a faith and to be treated with dignity. This is achieved by a community that advocates the best interest for the child and promotes children as active agents of their families and communities.

All members of the Diocese are encouraged to reference this Framework, along with the National Principles of a Child Safe Organisation and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards when considering the development and implementation of child related programs, associated resources and applicable policies and processes.

<sup>1</sup> What does the Children's Rights Report 2019 say?, National Children's Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission, <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights/publications/child-friendly-version-childrens-rights-report-2019>



Be treated fairly and equally.





## Children have the right to be treated fairly and equally.



This right promotes that all adults should do what is in the best interest for children. The Spirit of **Understanding** guides society to be truthful and act with justice and respect when engaging with children.

Scripture speaks to us about this right: *Happy are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times. (Psalm 106:3)*

### **This RIGHT relates to the following articles of the UN Convention:**

- Article 1 Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.
- Article 2 The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.
- Article 3 All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.
- Article 22 Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children who are born in that country.
- Article 25 Children who are looked after by their local authority rather than their parents should have their situation reviewed regularly.
- Article 37 Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in a prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their family.
- Article 40 Children who are accused of breaking the law should receive legal help. Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offences.

In our parish we believe that children are our present and our future, and so we welcome them, we respect them and we encourage their involvement in the life of our community. We believe that children are made in the image of God, and that they have legal and moral rights to be protected from exploitation, abuse and discrimination. We are always mindful of the vulnerability of children and we encourage them and their parents to speak up about anything they consider important. In our family-friendly parish, we encourage children to feel at home with us and we keep them safe. **Fr Jose, Parish Priest**



Children have the right to voice their thoughts when decisions are being made about them.



This right encourages all adults to listen to the opinions of children and involve them in decision making. The Spirit of **Right Judgment** guides society to be considerate, thoughtful and show respect for the views of children.

Scripture speaks to us about this right: *Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:4)*

**This RIGHT relates to the following articles of the UN Convention:**

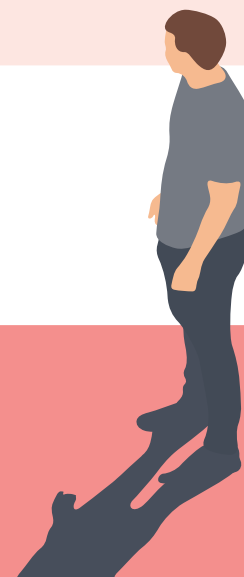
- Article 12 Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.
- Article 14 Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practice their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide children on these matters.

All decisions need to be made with the child's say as a feeling of autonomy and certain aspects of independence are essential for a child's development. It's important because the decision is about them! We need to go a step further and have the kid be present at the time of the decisions, so at least they've got a chance to have their voice be heard.

**Jess, Young Person - CatholicCare**

Allowing the young people to voice their thoughts on decisions being made about them empowers them to be an active participant in their own life and further contributes to them being able to discover their own identity, create belonging and work through their trauma.

**Laura, Therapeutic House Supervisor - CatholicCare**





Children have the right to live and grow in a healthy and clean environment.



This right promotes that all parents and carers have a responsibility to provide appropriate guidance to their children, so they survive and develop healthily. The Spirit of **Perseverance & Endurance** guides society to protect children from injustices by standing up and doing what is right with reason and grace.

Scripture speaks to us about this right: *So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith. (Galatians 6:10)*

**This RIGHT relates to the following articles of the UN Convention:**

- Article 6 Children have the right to live a full life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.
- Article 18 Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.
- Article 31 Children have the right to relax, play and to join in a wide range of leisure activities.
- Article 32 Governments should protect children from work that is dangerous or that might harm their health or education.
- Article 36 Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development.
- Article 39 Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.

Here at MacKillop our physical and mental health is prioritised. We have access to many sporting facilities here at our school including basketball courts and our oval. Through the abundance of support from our teachers and peers our mental health is valued to ensure we grow and develop in a healthy environment. Furthermore, our students and staff ensures our school is maintained through the use of bins and regular cleaners. **Jesse, Year 11 student**





## Children have the right to find out information and express themselves.



This right encourages all adults (including those in government and mass media roles) to provide information that children can understand and not to promote materials that could harm them. It also promotes, that children receive and share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or others. The Spirit of **Discernment** guides society to show good judgement and care when developing and delivering content for children.

Scripture speaks to us about this right: *Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments. (Psalm 119:66)*

### **This RIGHT relates to the following articles of the UN Convention:**

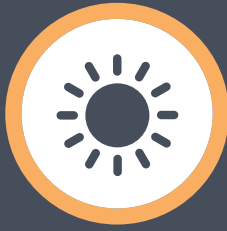
- Article 4 Governments should make these rights available to children.
- Article 5 Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights properly.
- Article 13 Children have the right to get and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.
- Article 17 Children have the right to reliable information from the media. Mass media such as television, radio and newspapers should provide information that children can understand and should not promote materials that could harm children.
- Article 42 Governments should make the Convention known to all parents and children.

As a Youth Coordinator, at the end of each youth group on a Friday, after a talk and discussion, we'd finish the night with a simple offer: An invitation for the young people to tell us leaders what it is they want to know about the faith. After all, it is about their own faith journeys! They have a right to learn about, and wrestle with, all the information we have on our Catholic teachings.

By creating a platform which imparted, what we knew to be, valuable information to the youth, it also bred a trust between the youth and their leaders, where they knew they could express themselves, their desires and dreams, concerns and fears, needs and dislikes, where they could speak and argue openly about their thoughts and experiences. And it could only have been done through the presence of a safe and supportive environment and community, that offers the opportunity for building such trust. **Rachel, Parish Formation and Resource Coordinator**

I can do my part by speaking confidently about my point of view and listening respectfully.





Children have the right to be protected, no matter their ability, language, belief or who they are with.



This right promotes that children receive care, protection and freedom that is best for their personal growth and well-being. The Spirit of **Wonder** guides society to acknowledge the vulnerability of children. Adults are called to do all they can to protect children from harmful and violent environments. Society is encouraged to celebrate the awesomeness of children.

Scripture speaks to us about this right: *And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'* (Matthew 25:40)

**This RIGHT relates to the following articles of the UN Convention:**

- Article 15 Children have the right to meet with other children and young people and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.
- Article 19 Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.
- Article 20 Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly by people who respect their religion, culture and language.
- Article 21 When children are adopted the first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether children are adopted in the country of their birth or if they are taken to live in another country.
- Article 33 Governments should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs.
- Article 34 Governments should protect children from sexual abuse.
- Article 35 Governments should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.
- Article 38 Governments should not allow children under 15 to join the army. Children in war zones should receive special protection.
- Article 41 If the laws of a particular country protect children better than the articles of the Convention, then those laws should override the Convention.

Kids sometimes have clouded views regarding their own safety or wellbeing but they should be able to confide in someone no matter the issue at hand. Personally, when I don't feel safe I feel like everyone is against me, I don't feel comfortable and I feel pressured to not be my true self and put a "mask" on. However, when I do feel safe I feel relaxed. **Jess, Young Person - CatholicCare**

We model to and show children how to be safe, through our actions, our words and our thinking. We demonstrate each child's value through this given right. We do this by ensuring all our carers understand, learn and can demonstrate how to be safe by making choices at all times which ensure the safety of the children we are entrusted with. **Mary, Therapeutic Specialist - CatholicCare**



Children have the right to a safe and loving home with clothes to wear and food to eat.



This right promotes that children be properly cared for and supported in their own home by a parent, carer or in some circumstances the government. The Spirit of **Love** guides society to serve honourably and champion what is best for children with loyalty and deep respect.

Scripture speaks to us about this right: *I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. (John 13:34)*

**This RIGHT relates to the following articles of the UN Convention:**

- Article 23 Children who have any kind of disability should receive special care and support so that they can live a full and independent life.
- Article 24 Children have the right to good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Richer countries should help poorer countries achieve this.
- Article 26 The Government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.
- Article 27 Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.

Families know there is always access to fee relief packages during any financial hardships they may be experiencing in life. The school will assist in any way to minimise impact at homes on providing shelter, food and clothing for their children.

We also raise awareness with our school children about local families who require assistance through our St Vincent De Paul group. Food, hygiene goods and clothing hampers are created yearly by the families from our school and donated from the school to those who are less fortunate than us. **Marta, School Principal**



Children have the right to privacy to enjoy and protect their life story.



This right promotes that laws should be written to protect children from actions of others that are destructive to them personally and their family's way of life. The Spirit of **Courage** guides society to show respect always and stand up and speak the truth against injustices such as bullying, discrimination and racism.

Scripture speaks to us about this right: *David said further to his son Solomon, "Be strong and of good courage, and act. Do not be afraid or dismayed; for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of the Lord is finished."* (1 Chronicles 28:20)

**This RIGHT relates to the following articles of the UN Convention:**

- Article 16 Children have the right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their family and their home.

We provide the opportunity for children to explore their relationship with God with the help of adults who are aware of and respect children's stages of development and are guided by the Holy Spirit. Children contribute to discussions with adults who: Take their contributions seriously and help them feel validated and respected.

We do this by: Gathering as co-listeners with children to explore what God is trying to reveal to us through his Word and Sacraments and we pose questions that guide the child into further self-exploration of this relationship. In this way the adult respects the child's right to privacy and enjoyment of their relationship with God.

**Angela, Pastoral Associate - Children's Ministries**





Children have the right to go to school and receive an education.



This right advises education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. Education programs should encourage children to respect human rights, languages, religions and cultures of their own and others. The Spirit of **Knowledge** guides society to share facts, information and acquired skills (age appropriate) with children in developing their respect for values and cultures of local and global communities.

Scripture speaks to us about this right: *An intelligent mind acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge. (Proverbs 18:15)*

**This RIGHT relates to the following articles of the UN Convention:**

- Article 28 Children have the right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthier countries should help poorer countries achieve this.
- Article 29 Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, their cultures and other cultures.
- Article 30 Children have the right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live, as long as this does not harm others.

We need an education so we can do our best when we leave school and get a job where we contribute to the world. If we try our best, whatever our ability then that is all that can be asked. Our parents work hard to send us to school and the teachers go to a lot of trouble – so it is up to the students to do their part and contribute the best they can. **Keeley and Emma, Year 5 students**





Children have the right to know who they are and where they come from.



This right promotes that children should know about their family members and maintain a connection with them (if safe to do so). The Spirit of **Joy** guides society to value and embrace a community where children feel a sense of belonging and acceptance.

Scripture speaks to us about this right: *Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me. (Isaiah 49:15-16)*

**This RIGHT relates to the following articles of the UN Convention:**

- Article 7 Children have the right to a legally registered name and nationality. Children also have the right to know their parents and, as far as possible, to be cared for by them.
- Article 8 Governments should respect a child's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.
- Article 9 Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. For example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm the child.
- Article 10 Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact or get back together as a family.
- Article 11 Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.

At CatholicCare our services play a significant role in continuity and preservation of cultural identity for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in our care. We recognise the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be raised in their own culture, know the value of their family, extended family, kinship networks, know their identity, grow up living culture, with a sense of belonging to community, building their Connection to country and language.

**Sarah, Aboriginal Community Engagement Manager**

## GLOSSARY

### Works of the Holy Spirit

*“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.”* (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). Gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit are both workings of God in an individual’s life. There are nine Scriptural fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5) and seven Scriptural gifts of the Spirit (Isaiah 11), though the Spirit is not limited to working in these ways only. All good and virtue is a work of the Spirit in our lives.

### Rights of the Child

The main international human rights treaty is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which Australia ratified in December 1990. The CRC incorporates all the general rights set out in other treaties that apply to everyone, as well as the special rights that apply to children.

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### More information

For further information on the Rights of the Child Framework you can email the Diocesan Office for Safeguarding at [safeguarding@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:safeguarding@bbcatholic.org.au) or phone **02 8379 1605**.



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