

# OUR STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14



NAME OF CHURCH: \_\_\_\_\_

Ensuring the safety and spiritual growth of our children and other vulnerable members of our congregation is the responsibility of every member of the Coptic Orthodox Church and the preeminent task of its leadership. Our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children is drawn from the teachings of Jesus Christ and inherent to the Gospel's message of love, justice, and the dignity of all. We are commanded and called by God to love, protect and guide the innocent and the vulnerable.

In addition to our religious conviction and obligation, the Diocese Management Committee of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne and Affiliated Regions (established by papal decree by His Holiness Pope Tawadros II on 8 November 2018 to manage the affairs of the Diocese) is mandated by the Australian federal and state governments to enact a transparent and comprehensive child safety framework and ensure compliance with its measures as a faith community working with children. Therefore, the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne and Affiliated Regions commits to sincere and ongoing efforts to:

- Recognize and promote the inherent dignity of children and young people.
- Provide an environment where all children are safe from harm and are nurtured, and respected. We particularly acknowledge the need for the potentially most vulnerable children of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, refugees and those living with disability.
- Zero tolerance of harm or abuse against children. No one is exempt due to perceived status or position.
- Promote a culture of child safety and implement the Child Safety Framework of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne and Affiliated Regions.
- Recognize that creating a child safe environment is a collective responsibility of the entire community and that requires collaboration and proactive approaches to child safety and wellbeing.
- Promote appropriate behaviour between adults and children and among children through transparency, supervision and managing risks to children.
- Prevent a culture of secrecy in which harm and abuse against children thrives and respond to any concerns or allegations with transparency and consistency.
- Empower members of our community – including families, children, clergy, staff and volunteers – to have a voice and raise concerns when confronted by an instance, allegation or suspicion of abuse or harm. We will support those who do raise concerns and investigate allegations according to the Child Safety Framework.
- Uphold the law and our statutory responsibilities, including the requirement to report harm or abuse to appropriate authorities.
- Impose appropriate ecclesiastical consequences within our Diocese of those in violation of child safety standards and coordinate with the Papal Office regarding any instances of child abuse to help prevent unknowing transfer of offending clergy or lay person.

Adopted/approved by:

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Daniel Ghabrial".

Name:  Rev Fr Daniel Ghabrial

Position: Vicar General

Date: 21 August 2020

This statement is to be formally reviewed and approved by Diocese Management Committee and the Relevant Parish Board of Deacons