

CHILD PROTECTION SUNDAY, 2020
by Clare Kennedy,
Local Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Representative



Image from [Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Child Protection Sunday 2020](#)

[CHILD PROTECTION WEEK 2020](#)

[National Child Protection Week](#) (NAPCAN - Play Your Part) is a campaign held annually across Australia to raise awareness of child abuse prevention. The objectives of the week are to raise the profile of all issues connected with child protection.

Protecting children from sexual exploitation is a whole of community responsibility.

The way in which we conduct our ministries, activities and services was changed to meet the challenges of COVID-19.

It has never been more important to not just stay connected- but to stay connected safely.

We have all had to “*up the anti*” on our use of technology and using technology safely. Perhaps we had children at home who had to connect to IT programs to livestream their lessons – no doubt a learning challenge for some parents or grandparents during that “*stay at home*” period. I know I had to brush up through YouTube on my Compound Fractions and Proper Nouns as things have changed a little since I went to school!

It is timely to remind parents and carers that they need to have “*age appropriate*” conversations with their children about personal safety & on-line activities and conversations about what to do if they find themselves in a situation that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Make children aware that unwanted touching by anyone (family, friends or strangers) is not **OK** and they have the right to say **NO**.

National Child Protection Week also aims to create an Australia-wide focus for child protection, allowing government and non-government agencies to present a cooperative and coordinated community orientated campaign.

When a child or vulnerable adult is abused, the physical and mental pain can last a lifetime.

Sadly, according to the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (known as NAPCAN) over 35,000 Australian children were abused last year.

Technology has given our children new opportunities for social interactions, and most importantly, more ways to learn about the world and express themselves. However, there are also challenges faced by our children online that we need to talk to them about. These include online grooming, cyber bullying, online reputation management and sharing of their images.

There is a cyber safety program called [ThinkUKnow](#) that provides presentations for both students and adults. It helps bridge the gap between parents, carers and teachers to explain what young people: [SEE](#), [SAY](#) and [DO](#) online and I encourage you all to check it out.

For more information on this you can go to www.thinkuknow.org.au and click on the Parents and Carers Portal.

This program is delivered in partnership with the Australian Federal Police (AFP), Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Datacom and Microsoft Australia, and in collaboration with all state and territory police and Neighbourhood Watch Australasia. It enables a whole-of-community approach, driven through the lens of technology and real police experiences. By educating and empowering our children to be safe, respectful and resilient online, we can help minimise the risk of things going wrong online.

The best way to understand what your children are doing online is to [ASK](#) them about what they are [SEEING](#), [SAYING](#) and [DOING](#) online.

The idea is not to come from a negative mindset of fear and anxiety, but instead approaching safeguarding with a positive mindset – that's what's really important.

We want to protect children and make our communities safe places to be for "children and vulnerable adults".

Since March this year, we have made many changes here in our own Parish of St Joseph & St Anthony's to stay connected with you the parishioners. It has been a challenging time as we set up live-streaming of the 9.30am mass, maintain our Parish web sites so we can catch up with Fr Gerry's homilies, prayers for particular groups around our Country and the world, keeping in touch with the Youth Groups and any changes within the Archdiocese of Brisbane.


If you have any concerns about our parish community, please feel free to contact me – my details are always in our newsletter and now on our parish web site as many are not able to physically attend mass. [<http://bit.ly/LSRClareKennedy>]

Information can also be shared anonymously by contacting [STOPline](https://stoline.com.au) on 1300 304 550 or online at <https://bnecatholic.stoplinereport> – a free service provided by the [Archdiocese of Brisbane](https://www.archdioceseofbrisbane.org.au).

If you have concerns about children and adults outside of our parish activities, please call the Police in your local area or 000 if urgent.

We have many people in our parish who have put in a lot of time and effort behind the scenes to ensure we are compliant and safe in all that we do - we give thanks for their dedication to these parish ministries.

Clare Kennedy, Local Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Representative
[Parish of St. Joseph & St. Anthony, Bracken Ridge / Bald Hills](#)



September 13, 2020
CHILD PROTECTION SUNDAY 2020

Gracious God,
you love and care for all of your children,
especially the smallest and most vulnerable.

We entrust to you the lives of children and
adults at risk
who have been sexually abused,
and whose trust and innocence have been
destroyed.

Help us to hear their cries of pain
and to take responsibility for those whose lives
have been broken.

Help us to recognise the hurt felt by those
wounded by abuse,
and the failure to be heard.

We pray that with the help of your grace
communities and families will find
understanding and support,
so that now and in the future
their wounds may be healed
and they may find lasting peace.

Let your grace and love fall gently now upon
our children,
giving them the inner strength, peace and
resilience
to seek out assistance when required.

We ask this prayer through our Lord Jesus
Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever
and ever.

Amen

[Prayer by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference for Child Protection Sunday, 2020](#)