Date

Dear XXXXX

To enhance safety for children in NSW, the Government has extended the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme to religious entities. The change has come about through the new Children’s Guardian Act 2019 which takes effect from 1st March 2020.

In 2018, The Bishops of NSW supported the government in this initiative as part of the Australian community’s commitment to the protection of children from abuse. This change was one of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme has operated in NSW for 20 years. It is not new. Simply, the changes now extend the scheme for the first time to religious entities and so it captures more of our volunteers, employees and contractors who were not previously covered by this Scheme.

As a ‘worker’ in the Diocese of Parramatta (that is an employee, volunteer, religious/clergy member, contractor or sub-contractor) you must be informed of the Scheme. If you are required to hold a Working with Children Check (WWCC) for your engagement in the parish/ministry, you are called a ‘worker’ under the Scheme. You need to be aware of your responsibilities and how it could affect you.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme is allegation based. The Scheme enables us to be better placed to protect children, and have a fair process for workers, by responding promptly to information about inappropriate conduct by workers towards or with children.

Notifications of any allegations are to come to me in my role as {role}, and I will then send it to the Office for Safeguarding Diocese of Parramatta (OSDP). The Bishop has arranged for the OSDP to centrally manage all notifications and inquiries for all parishes and ministries in the Diocese. Any allegations that cannot be reported to me for any reason should communicated by you directly to the OSDP.

The Diocese has been managing allegations of reportable conduct that schools, child care centers and other agencies have been required to report and investigate for the past 20 years, so we are well equipped with procedures and support frameworks to manage the extension of the scheme to workers in parishes and ministries who were not previously covered by this Scheme. For most of us, the matters that require notification under the Scheme are matters we already reported as part of our duty of care and professional standards.

The role of the NSW Children’s Guardian Office is to oversight how the Diocese manages the notification and subsequent process. This includes, amongst other things, that we comply to the timeframes required at law, undertake proper risks assessments, and ensure fair procedures to those persons subject of the allegations.

I thank you for taking up your responsibility in keeping children safe by supporting the Diocese in our compliance to this government scheme.

Further resources and information is available at*:* [www.safeguarding.org.au](http://www.safeguarding.org.au) or NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian: [www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au).

Please speak to me if you have any questions at all about how the reportable conduct scheme may apply to you.