

Rosa Veritas



Ethics and Safety Policy

Introduction

Rosa Veritas is established under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015* (Western Australia) and is recognised as a religious denomination by the Commonwealth of Australia.

Rosa Veritas is also located in Aotearoa New Zealand and in the Netherlands. This policy applies to Rosa Veritas, wherever it is located.

Rosa Veritas is committed to fulfilling its responsibility to conduct its organisation ethically and safely and to making its Meriti, Priests, Deacons, office-holders, members, employees and volunteers aware of and accountable for their individual and corporate responsibilities.

The Law applicable in the State of Victoria, Australia, has been adopted as the benchmark upon which Rosa Veritas bases its documentation, policy and procedures. This legislation is currently regarded as the most progressive available. Particular exceptions to Victorian law will be taken into account, such as the lower defining age of a child under the law of New South Wales, Australia and the higher defining age of a child in the New Zealand.¹

¹ A *child* is generally defined as a person under the age of 18 years except in NSW where a child is a person under the age of 16 years and in Aotearoa New Zealand where a child is under the age of 20.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To implement the whole-making ministry of Rosa Veritas by facilitating an international organisation-wide culture of individual safety, integrity, well-being and attainment of the individual's true potential;
2. To prevent abuse of adults, children and vulnerable persons² occurring within Rosa Veritas;
3. To provide a clear statement to Meriti, Priests, Deacons, office-holders, members, employees and volunteers that abuse and unsafe behaviour are unacceptable.
4. To educate all members of Rosa Veritas of their responsibilities through the provision of policy, processes and relevant information.
5. To ensure that all members of Rosa Veritas are aware of their individual responsibilities for identifying potential occasions for abuse, acting to prevent such abuse, detecting such abuse when it occurs and reporting abuse appropriately;
6. To provide guidance to the Meriti, Priests, Deacons, office-holders, members, employees, volunteers as to action that should be taken where there is suspected abuse by members or associated persons, within or outside of Rosa Veritas.

² A *vulnerable person* is defined as (a) a child or (b) an individual aged 18 years (over 16 years in NSW) and older, who is or may be unable to care for themselves or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, trauma or disability, or any other reason.

7. To provide timely support to members of Rosa Veritas when there is a report of abuse;
8. To affirm that any and all reasonably suspected instances of abuse will be reported according to relevant law of the land and be fully investigated;
9. To enable timely and fair processes for making and investigating any reports of abuse of members or by members, including implementing those processes required by law in relation to child abuse and reportable conduct.

Policy

All adults, children and vulnerable persons, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse. Children, vulnerable persons and adults, are entitled to have their voices heard.

Rosa Veritas does not tolerate or condone child abuse. All members of Rosa Veritas are responsible for the care and protection of vulnerable persons and children and reporting information about suspected abuse.

If any child or young person seeking to become part of Rosa Veritas and/or participate in its services or facilities identifies as having a disability, or comes from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, or is unable to live at home, or identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, non-binary or gender diverse, the leaders and members of Rosa Veritas will seek to understand their diverse circumstances and pay attention to their specific needs. This is to ensure that its services and facilities are made available in a safe, accessible, and appropriate way in the specific circumstances of the child or young person.

Rosa Veritas is also committed to a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of any First Nations children or young persons who participates in its services or facilities are respected and valued.

Rosa Veritas is committed to effective and culturally appropriate complaint handling processes being understood by any children, young people and their families using its services and facilities.

Rosa Veritas requires its Priests and Deacons to maintain current Working with Children/Vulnerable

Persons checks in Australia and relevant safety checks in Aotearoa New Zealand and the Netherlands.

In Australia, Rosa Veritas complies with organisational safety and reporting standards including the Victorian “child safe standards” and “the reportable conduct scheme” to keep children safe from abuse, applicable to religious organisations from 1 January 2018 under the Victorian *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*.

In Australia, Rosa Veritas Priests and Deacons comply with mandatory reporting laws under the Victorian *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*.

Internationally, Rosa Veritas requires its Priests and Deacons to comply with relevant laws and mandated safety standards applicable to adults, children and vulnerable persons, including in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Netherlands and wherever Rosa Veritas Priests and Deacons are located.

Rosa Veritas requires its Meriti, Priests, Deacons, Initiates, Members, office-holders, employees and volunteers, wherever they are located, to abide by its Code of Conduct for child safety and protection of vulnerable persons.

Rosa Veritas establishes and implements procedures to meet its organisational and individual legal and ethical obligations in all locations in which Rosa Veritas is found:

- to report without delay any reasonable belief that a child needs protection to Child Protection authorities (mandatory for Priests and Deacons).
- to immediately report to Police a concern that a child or adult is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation (required of all Meriti, Priests, Deacons, office-holders, members, employees and volunteers).
- to prevent child abuse and reportable conduct from being committed within the organisation;

- to enable reportable conduct allegations which are made to the senior Meritus³ to be investigated and reported appropriately.
- to enable reportable allegations made about the conduct of a Meritus to be reported to the Commission for Children and Young People (Victoria, Australia) or other such official body in the relevant State of Australia or in Aotearoa New Zealand or in the Netherlands.
- to prevent abuse of vulnerable persons from being committed within the organisation.
- during investigation or any legal proceedings regarding allegations of abuse or reportable conduct, to take appropriate protective action, including standing down the accused person from office or position within Rosa Veritas.
- where a person has a criminal conviction for sexual abuse or other abuse of a child or a vulnerable person, the senior Meritus will take protective action including removing the convicted person from any spiritual or temporal office within Rosa Veritas.
- where a person has a criminal conviction for sexual abuse or other abuse of an adult, the senior Meritus will take appropriate protective action which may include removing the convicted person from any spiritual or temporal office within Rosa Veritas.
- where court orders in civil proceedings have been made against a person, based on sexual abuse or other abuse of a child or vulnerable person, the senior Meritus will take protective action including removing that person from any spiritual or temporal office within Rosa Veritas.
- where court orders in civil proceedings have been made against a person, based on sexual abuse or other abuse of an adult, the senior

Meritus will take appropriate protective action which may include removing that person from any spiritual or temporal office within Rosa Veritas.

Ensuring child safety and protection of children and vulnerable persons is a shared responsibility at Rosa Veritas of the Meriti, Priests, Deacons, office-holders, members, employees, volunteers of the Rosa Veritas communities, wherever they are located.

Rosa Veritas will maintain rules and regulations providing for dispute resolution between members of the organisation and for dismissal of Meriti, Priests, Deacons and Members from the organisation.

Review of Policy

Rosa Veritas is committed to continuous improvement and will review its policy and procedures every two years. Rosa Veritas will examine incidences and reports to identify systemic issues and take lessons from what we learn. We commit to the following principles and actions:

- to monitor the implementation of our ethics and safety policies and procedures and conduct regular reviews of our adult-safe and child-safe practices.
- To critically review all incidents and reports to identify causes and trends, manage risks, identify systemic issues of abuse to improve our policies and practices.
- To communicate with our people and communities on the findings of relevant reviews.

Contact

To contact the Ethics and Safety Committee, send an email to ethics@rosaveritas.org.

³The senior Meritus is determined by the earliest date of elevation to that office.

Version Control

Version 2 adopted by the Rosa Veritas Consultative Council: 1 June 2022

Review date: 30 June 2024

Record of Changes

Version 2: new text inserted under “Policy” refers to disability and cultural diversity, adopted 1 June 2022

Ethics and Safety documents are available at www.rosaveritas.org.