

Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

Safe Ministry Policy

Plain language version – 12 October 2021

About this document

This document was written by the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne. This is our Safe Ministry Policy.

We will ensure ministries are spiritually, emotionally and physically safe. This policy helps us achieve safe ministry, programs and activities.

Zero-tolerance culture

We will develop a zero-tolerance culture to build and maintain safe ministries.

We will:

- foster relationships between church members and the wider community
- provide a safe environment where all people feel respected
- have clear processes that empower everyone, including children and other vulnerable people
- provide responsible and loving Christian leadership and ministry built on Scripture
- minimise the risk of misconduct and abuse and the misuse of positional power
- handle complaints and other issues in a consistent, fair and thorough manner
- fulfil our biblical, pastoral, legal and moral obligations.

Who must follow this policy?

This policy applies to everyone in roles, offices and positions in our Diocese. This includes everyone across:

- St Paul's Cathedral
- parishes
- Authorised Anglican Congregations or AACs.

The Policy

Statements

- All people in our Church have a right to feel safe in our ministry, programs and activities.
- We need to consider all people including:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
 - people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - any person with a disability.
- We show a commitment to everyone's safety through our:
 - acts
 - regulations
 - codes of conduct
 - policies
 - guidelines
 - procedures
 - safe ministry documentation.
- We seek feedback from children, parents and guardians. These individuals help us create a culture of child safety.
- We think the wider community also have a responsibility for child safety. We will work with the wider community to create a culture of child safety.
- We are committed to thorough and effective governance for safe ministry to children and vulnerable people at the Diocesan and parish level.
- We will continue to improve our documents and processes to maintain a culture of child safety.
- We will follow secular legislation.

Roles and Responsibilities

All people within the Church must:

- take all reasonable steps to prevent or avoid risks of any abuse or harm to members of the Church and the wider community
- agree to follow acts, regulations, codes of conduct, policies, guidelines, procedures and related safe ministry documentation of the Diocese
- take part in required screening and training for their role.

Clergy and the Parish Council must ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the parish or AAC follows:

- the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 for Victoria
- the Diocesan Occupational Health and Safety Policy.

People in religious ministry are mandatory reporters in Victoria. [The 'Mandatory Reporting for people in religious ministry'](#) document includes more information about mandatory reporting.

The Archbishop

The Archbishop is

- the Head of Entity under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- the Church authority under the Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016 of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne.

The Archbishop must report all child safety matters in line with these acts.

Archbishop in Council

The Archbishop in Council

- works with Kooyoora
- is the Safe Ministry Authority of the Diocese under the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2007 of General Synod
- is the Church authority under the Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016 of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne.

Kooyoora is the Office of Professional Standards for the Diocese.

The Archbishop in Council:

- approves this policy and related safe ministry documentation for the Diocese
- oversees safe ministry governance bodies and resources
- oversees the implementation of this policy and related safe ministry documentation
- gives resources to help office holders follow this policy and safe ministry documentation
- works with the Governance and Nominations Committee to approve memberships in the Safe Ministry Reference Group.

Safe Ministry Reference Group

The Safe Ministry Reference Group:

- offer expertise to the Archbishop and the Archbishop in Council
- ensure safe ministry to children and other vulnerable persons in parishes and AACs
- support parishes and AACs to follow:
 - acts
 - regulations
 - codes of conduct
 - policies
 - guidelines
 - procedures
 - safe ministry documentation of the Diocese.

Diocesan Safe Ministry and Inclusion Officer

The Diocesan Safe Ministry and Inclusion Officer:

- coordinates the development and implementation of this policy and related safe ministry documentation
- builds relationships with internal and external stakeholders
- conducts risk assessments
- advocates for cultural change
- offers advice and promotes safe ministry compliance and good practice across the Diocese
- oversees the delivery of safe ministry training across the Diocese.

Kooyoora

Kooyoora:

- promotes knowledge, understanding and observance of codes of conduct in the Diocese
- implements and monitors reportable conduct, persons of concern, and the National Register canon
- manages and administer clearances for clergy and lay people
- manages complaints and investigations of alleged misconduct
- gives decisions and recommendations to the Church authority
- appoints members to professional standards' bodies to support safe ministry
- manages the Kooyoora Independent Redress Scheme
- helps the Diocese manage applications for redress.

Clergy

Clergy:

- chooses people for roles, offices and positions
- works with parish councils to make sure everyone follows this policy and related safe ministry documentation within their parish or AAC
- is the Church authority under the Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016 of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne
- reports all concerns and risks to Kooyoora.

Parish Council

Parish Council:

- will work with clergy to choose who will be the child safety officer in the parish or AAC
- communicates decisions to the diocese
- includes safe ministry in all parish council meetings
- includes clear links to this policy, and safe ministry documentation, on the parish or AAC's website
- is the Church authority under the Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016 of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne.

Parish Child Safety Officer

Parish Child Safety Officer:

- helps everyone to follow this policy
- keeps records for screening, training and risk management
- is the main contact for child safety in the parish or AAC.

More information

You can read the below documents to learn more about our work to improve child safety.

- Code of Conduct for Child Safety
- Safe Ministry Statement of Commitment
- Guidelines for Child Safety
- [Clearance for Ministry information](#)
- [Clearance for Service information](#)
- Kooyoora reporting guidelines
- Protocol for responding to complaints of misconduct
- [Mandatory reporting fact sheet](#)
- [Person of Concern Protocol](#)
- [OHS resources for parishes](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Policy](#)
- Risk Management Procedure
- Safe Ministry fact sheets, forms and resources

- [Protecting God's Children booklet](#)
- [Family Violence policy, procedures and guidelines for church workers](#)

General Synod and Diocesan legislation, regulations and other documents

- [Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016](#)
- [Professional Standards Uniform Regulations 2017](#)
- [National Register Canon 2007](#)
- [Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017](#)
- Safe Ministry Training Benchmarks
- Faithfulness in Service
- Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Communion
- Policy for Safe Ministry in a parish where there is a risk of sexual abuse by a Person of Concern
- Persons of Concern Policy – Guidelines for Implementation June 2017

Victorian legislation and other documents

- Wrongs Act 1958
- Worker Screening Act 2020
- Betrayal of Trust
 - Failure to Protect
 - Failure to Disclose
 - Grooming Offence
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Child Safe Standards
- Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

How will we review and improve our policy?

The Safe Ministry Reference Committee is review this policy every second year. The Committee will make recommendations for amendments to the Archbishop in Council. The Church community will have an opportunity to be part of our reviews.

A review can happen at any time if an incident occurs in breach of this policy. This will help us ensure the policy remains relevant, accessible and effective.