Safe Ministry
NEWSLETTER

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

Edition 5 / 2023

Welcome to the December 2023 edition of the Safe Ministry Newsletter. Thank you for your time reading this newsletter.

Keeping all people safe is everyone's responsibility. Thank you for playing your part in ensuring our parishes and congregations are safe places where all people can thrive and hear the good news of Jesus.

A Message from Anne (Safe Ministry and Inclusion Officer)

 As we come to the season of Advent and have more visitors coming to Christmas celebrations, we encourage you to continue with your safe ministry practices from the Action Plan for meeting the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

In this newsletter I encourage you to read:

- thoughts from Karen, the new diocesan Children's Ministry Consultant, on page 2 about Safe Ministry in her ministry and parish.
- information relating to access and inclusion for people with disabilities, another very important aspect of safe ministry.

Thank you for continuing to invest in developing and building the culture of safety in all areas of ministry and church life across our diocese. As always, please keep in touch via email, safeministry@melbourneanglican.org.au.

Anne

Important updates in this Newsletter include:

Children's Ministry Consultant

Disability access and inclusion

Risk Management Plan

Important Reminder:

Volunteer and Lay Employee Register are part of annual returns

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News

In this edition of the Safe Ministry Newsletter, you can read more about:

- **Children's Ministry Consultant**
- **Disability access and inclusion update**
- **Volunteer and Lay Employee Registers**
- **Risk Management**
- **Diocesan Action Plan for Meeting the Victorian Child Safe Standards**
- **Safe Ministry Training & Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing**
- **Safe Ministry Toolbox**
- **Helpful Links**

Children's Ministry Consultant

Karen Winsemius is the Children's Ministry Consultant in the diocese of Melbourne, and also works as the Associate Pastor at Oaktree Anglican. Here are some of her thoughts about safe ministry, how it's changed over the years and building a culture of safety in her ministry.

"Over the time I've worked in church ministry, there has been such a change in how we've thought about and talked about safety in our churches. I have been so glad to see a more positive emphasis on creating a culture of safety, not for the sake of compliance, but first because all people are made in the image of God, and worthy of love and respect. Whilst this might seem like a no-brainer, there are so many in our churches who we accidentally or inadvertently ignore, or don't listen to when it comes to creating a safe culture. Whether it's children, those with a disability, women, or someone from a different cultural background - we can easily forget that not everyone's experience is the same as our own, and therefore not everyone's needs are the same as our own. By putting in the time and effort to listen to the voices of others, we can go a long way to create a safe church - a place where everyone truly feels like they belong - a picture of Revelation 7:9.

At my church, we're still working at growing this culture, but it starts with small steps - like including the children and youth in whole church vision discussions, and then actually doing what they say! When we truly believe that every member of the church has equal value, it challenges us to take that seriously by putting our words into action, which makes us a better church."

Disability access and inclusion update

Further to International Day of People with Disabilities and as parishes have more people joining in Christmas services and activities, please continue to look at these strategies to make it easier for all people to access and be included in your parish. These are all part of making our parishes more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities.

- Can someone in a wheelchair/mobility scooter access these services and activities?
- Are there signs pointing to the accessible entry? If not, you can buy one at Bunnings/Officeworks/etc or Disabled & Handicap Signs | Safety Signs Australia
- Is the accessible toilet ready for use and easy to get to? Not used as a storeroom?

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- If your building is accessible, does your website detail this?
- How would someone get to these activities/services if they don't drive? Are the closest bus/tram/train stops listed on your website?
- Have you thought about how the lighting/sound systems may affect those with sensory sensitivities attending these services?
- Are captions used on the big screen?
- What fonts and colours are used on the service slides?

Another resource is Luke 14, a Bible based resource from CBM parishes and congregations can use to build their accessibility and inclusive practices.

After a long recruitment and approval process, we are pleased to announce Virginia McDonald as the Disability Inclusion Officer joining the Parish and Diocesan Partnerships team in January 2024. Please pray for her as she prepares for this role to promote this area of safe ministry in our diocese.

Does everyone in your parish or congregation know how to speak up if they have a concern about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person?

If something doesn't look, feel, or sound right, **speak up**.

Adults can support children and young people to tell someone they trust is they have a concern.

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Updates

Volunteer and Lay Employee Registers

From 2023, a clergy declaration and copy of the parish or congregation's Volunteer and Employee Register is part of the annual return to be forwarded to Registry Services. Information about what is included in the annual returns can be found on the Parish Portal.

The Volunteer and Lay Employee Register is an ongoing, living document and tool which is to be kept up to date by each parish and congregation as a record of the screening and safe ministry training undertaken by each volunteer/employee. Each parish will have their own administrative processes however the Vicar holds overall responsibility for ensuring that safe ministry screening and training requirements are met, including the upkeep of this register.

Risk Management

The Safe Ministry Reference Group is progressing work on the Child Abuse Risk Management Tool aiming to have it available early in 2024. Please keep an eye out for further communications about this.

This child abuse risk management tool is to specifically mitigate the risk of child abuse and will need to be part of a parish's annual risk assessments. Other OHS risk management information and tools can be found here on the parish portal.

Did you know?
Child Safe Standard #9 requires physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

How does your parish/congregation do this?
The minimum parish actions include:
- *Implement all ADOM child safety policies and procedures when using the online environment.*
- *Diocesan incident forms for safety incidents are reported to parish councils.*
- *Diocesan hire agreements are used for hire of all parish facilities.*
- *Diocesan risk management plans are implemented. Annual parish risk assessments are completed.*

Diocesan Action Plan for Meeting the Victorian Child Safe Standards

Coming to the end of 2023 and the commencement of 2024, please continue to work through this action plan. Continuing to work through this and imbedding this into our practice builds our culture of keeping all people safe.

As a diocese, we are all continuing to work on both parish and diocesan actions in this Action Plan. Please use the Parish Self-Assessment template to record your parish examples. This template and the Action Plan can be found on the Child Safe Standards page of the Safe Ministry Toolbox.

Safe Ministry Training & Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing

When the Safe Ministry training was updated in April 2023, the Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing was included in Safe Ministry Essentials level 1, Safe Ministry with Children and Young People level 2 and the Clergy and Authorised Minister modules. Those who have completed these updated modules online will have signed this document.

For those who completed Level 1 training prior to April 2023, they will need to sign the new Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing.

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Safe Ministry Toolbox Webpage

The Safe Ministry Toolbox is the first place to go for all diocesan Safe Ministry resources. These resources are updated regularly, and additional resources are added as they are developed. Please remember to familiarise yourself, your staff and volunteers with this Toolbox.

The resources in this Toolbox are found in these pages:

- Child Safe Standards - Child Safe Standards and Action Plan
- Document Library - Safe Ministry and Child Safety and Wellbeing policies and procedures
- Complaints - how to report, our duty to report and Reportable Conduct
- Training - handouts, guides, and links to safe ministry training modules
- Clearances - clearance for service requirements and information
- Latest News and Updates - previous Safe Ministry Newsletter editions and videos
- Parish & Congregation Administration - determination charts, template forms, info booklets, posters
- Support & Redress - Redress scheme information and variety of support service contact details

Parish websites are to be linked to the Safe Ministry Toolbox for all safe ministry information, including policies and procedures. The link to use is https://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/safe-ministry/

A Safe Ministry Prayer

Dear God,

We are so sorry for the times our church has hurt others and not been a safe place.

Please forgive us. Please comfort and heal those people.

May your Spirit enable us to right wrongs and help us to make and keep our churches safe.

Help us look after everyone, including children and vulnerable people.

Please guide our leaders as they make decisions that keep our ministries safe.

Help each one of us do our part in making church a safe place for everyone.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen

- written by Revd. Amy Brown with Bishop Genieve Blackwell, 2022

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Helpful Links

Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) - useful guides and information about the new Child Safe Standards, including translated information sheets in many languages.

eSafety Commissioner - See the eSafety website for more information about popular and emerging online technologies and ways to support children and youth in online spaces. eSafety also have a guide to tech gifts for Christmas.

Kids Helpline - a great resource for children, youth and families

Kooyoora - As well as reporting concerns to Kooyoora, they can also be contacted for advice and support.

International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPwD) - Resources for inclusion and access for people with disabilities

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REPORTING CHILD ABUSE IS A COMMUNITY-WIDE RESPONSIBILITY

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Reporting Child Abuse in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

1 If a child is in **immediate danger** at any point **CALL 000**

2

All suspicions or reports of child abuse must be reported to:	What is Child Abuse?	Who can report neglect and abuse of a child under the age of 18?	What sorts of things must be reported?
Police Child Protection Kooyoora Professional Standards	Abuse and neglect includes but is not limited to: **Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Family Violence, Sexual Abuse, Grooming and Neglect.**	Children, Parents, Staff, Volunteers, Anyone.	All child safety concerns must be reported: • Disclosure of past and present abuse and harm • Allegations, suspicions or observations • Breaches of the Code of Conduct

CONTACT NUMBERS: | **POLICE 000** | **CHILD PROTECTION SEE BELOW** | **KOOYOORA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS 1800 135 246**

Contact the child protection intake service that covers the area in which the child lives:

North Division
1300 664 977

Area Includes:

Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Macedon Ranges, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea; Yarra.

South Division
1300 655 795

Area Includes:

Bayside, Cardinia, Casey, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Mornington Peninsula, Port Phillip, Stonnington.

East Division
1300 369 391

Area Includes:

Booroondara, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Mitchell, Monash, Murrindindi, Whitehorse, Yarra Ranges.

West Division
(Rural and regional only)
1800 075 599

Area Includes:

Golden Plains, Greater Geelong, Moorabool, Queenscliffe, Surf Coast.

West Division
(Metropolitan only)
1300 664 977

Area Includes:

Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Melton, Moonee Valley, Wyndham.

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