ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

Safe Ministry Policy

Approved by Archbishop in Council
under section 14 of Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016

Version 2.0, updated April 2023

Making the Word of God fully known

Safe Ministry Policy

Policy:	Safe Ministry Policy
Prepared by:	Registry – Safeguarding
Approved by:	Archbishop in Council
Responsibility of:	Archbishop in Council
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1. Purpose

This policy expresses the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne's commitment to safe ministry to fulfil the Church's biblical, pastoral, legal and moral responsibilities, with the goal that all our ministries are spiritually, emotionally and physically safe.

This policy guides our behaviour and provides the foundation for ministry, programs and activities that are run in safe environments. In the Bible, we are given this command: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and love your neighbour as yourself" (Deut 6:5, Matt 22:37, Luke 10:27). God calls us to love and minister to vulnerable and marginalised people – these are people who need special care, protection and support.

The Diocese is committed to promoting and protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of all people. The Diocese has zero tolerance for abuse and harm, and builds and maintains safe ministries by:

- Maintaining a clear and robust child safety framework.
- Fostering healthy relationships between church members, and those of the wider community, based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- Providing a safe and secure environment where all people are, and feel, respected.
- Having clear and well-communicated processes that empower all people, including children and other vulnerable people.
- Providing responsible and loving Christian leadership and ministry built on Scripture.
- Minimising the risk of misconduct, including harassment (such as racism and discrimination) and other forms of abuse, and the misuse of power by those in authority in churches.
- Ensuring that all complaints of misconduct and all other grievances are handled in a consistent, unbiased, fair and thorough manner.
- Fulfilling our biblical, pastoral, legal and moral obligations.

2. Scope

This policy outlines our commitments, responsibilities and procedures for safe ministry. It applies to everyone in roles, offices and positions in our Diocese, including in St Paul's Cathedral, parishes and Authorised Anglican Congregations ('AACs').

This policy should be read in accordance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the Child Safety Policy for Children, the Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing, and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Procedure, which address our commitment to child safety and wellbeing, and the responsibilities and procedures for safe ministry in relation to children and young people. To the extent of any inconsistency, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the Child Safety Policy for Children, and Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing will prevail.

3. Policy Statements

As a Diocese, we are committed to the spiritual, emotional and physical safety and well-being of all people participating in the life and ministries of our Church:

1. We acknowledge that all people in our Church have the right to feel and be safe in their interactions and experiences in all our ministry, programs and activities.
2. We acknowledge the need for sensitivity to, and consideration of all people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background,
3. We acknowledge the need for sensitivity to, and consideration of, all people of culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and any person with a disability.
4. We commit ourselves to the wellbeing of all people through our acts, regulations, codes of conduct, policies, guidelines, procedures and related safe ministry documentation, which includes:
   i) Guidance for how to develop and maintain safe and supportive physical and online environments where people are listened to and feel safe as they develop faith and a connection with God and others.
   ii) Safe and effective recruitment, training, supervision, support and resourcing.
   iii) Appropriate and timely responses to all complaints of alleged misconduct and all other grievances.
   iv) Pastoral care in responding to those who have been abused or harmed.
   v) Safe and appropriate ministry to persons of concern.
5. We acknowledge the role of children, parents, guardians and the community in creating a culture of child safety and will actively engage with children and their parents, guardians and the wider community, inviting open communication and feedback.
6. We acknowledge the shared responsibility of the whole community for child safety and wellbeing, including parents, guardians and people in roles, offices and positions within the Church. As such, we will actively promote the role of parents, guardians and the wider community in the shared responsibility for child safety.
7. We are committed to thorough and effective governance for safe ministry to children and all vulnerable people at the Diocesan and parish level.
8. We will engage in continuous improvement of our acts, regulations, codes of conduct, policies, guidelines, procedures and related safe ministry documentation.
9. We will comply with all relevant secular legislation.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

All people in roles, offices and positions within the Church:

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

Clergy and the Parish Council must ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the parish or AAC complies with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* 2004 (Victoria) and the Diocesan Occupational Health and Safety Policy.

"People in religious ministry" are mandatory reporters in Victoria (see Mandatory Reporting for people in religious ministry factsheet).

5. Specific roles under this Policy

The Archbishop:

- Is the Head of Entity for the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne for the Reportable Conduct Scheme matters under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act* 2005 (Victoria).
- Is the Church authority for defined matters under the *Professional Standards Uniform Act* 2016 (Anglican Diocese of Melbourne).
- Licenses and appoints clergy and lay ministers.

Archbishop in Council:

- Acts (with Kooyoora) as the Safe Ministry Authority of the Diocese under the *Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2007* of General Synod.
- Is the Church authority for defined matters under the *Professional Standards Uniform Act* 2016 (Anglican Diocese of Melbourne).
- Approve this policy, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Procedure, Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing, and related safe ministry and child safety documentation for the Diocese.
- Oversees safe ministry governance bodies and resources.
- Oversees the implementation of this policy and related safe ministry documentation.
- Ensures office holders have adequate resources to carry out this policy and related safe ministry documentation.
- Approves, through the Governance and Nominations Committee, membership of the Safe Ministry Reference Group.

Assistant Bishops

- Support parishes to resolve misunderstandings and conflicts.
- Report, if it has not occurred already, all concerns in relation to risk of harm and any known persons of concern to Kooyoora.

Safe Ministry Reference Group:

- Provides an expert resource to the Archbishop and the Archbishop in Council on safe ministry to children and other vulnerable persons in parishes and AACs.
- Supports parishes and AACs to adhere to acts, regulations, codes of conduct, policies, guidelines, procedures and related safe ministry and child safety documentation of the Diocese.

Diocesan Safe Ministry and Inclusion Officer:

- Coordinates the development and implementation of this policy and related safe ministry and child safety 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 Ltd:

- Promotes knowledge, understanding and observance of codes of conduct and child safety documentation in the Diocese.
- Implements and monitors reportable conduct, persons of concern, and the National Register Canon.
- Manages and administers clearances for clergy and lay people.
- Manages complaints and investigations of alleged misconduct, including making determinations and recommendations to the Church authority.
- Appoints members to professional standards' bodies to support safe ministry.
- Manages the Kooyoora Independent Redress Scheme and supports the Diocese's response to applications for redress under the National Redress Scheme.

Director of Episcopal Standards

- Manages complaints and investigations of alleged misconduct in relation to the Archbishop.

Clergy:

- Appoint people to roles, offices and positions, subject to obtaining any relevant safe ministry clearances.
- Implement, with parish councils, this policy and related safe ministry and child safety documentation within their parish or AAC.
- In the case of a Vicar, acting with the churchwardens, is the Church authority for persons of concern under the *Professional Standards Uniform Act* 2016 (Anglican Diocese of Melbourne).

- Report, if it has not occurred already, all concerns in relation to risk of harm and any known persons of concern to Kooyoora.

Parish Council:

- Appoints a child safety officer in the parish or AAC, ensuring the Diocese is made aware of this appointment and given contact details.
- Implements, with clergy, this policy and related safe ministry and child safety documentation within their parish or AAC.
- Considers safe ministry and child safety as a standing item at parish council meetings.
- Ensures there is a clear link to this policy and related safe ministry and child safety documentation on the parish or AAC's website.
- In the case of churchwardens, acting with the Vicar, is the Church authority for persons of concern under the *Professional Standards Uniform Act* 2016 (Anglican Diocese of Melbourne).

Authorised Stipendiary/Honorary Lay Minister (ASLM / ALHM):

- Reports, if it has not occurred already, all concerns in relation to risk of harm and any known persons of concern to Kooyoora.
- Works with the Parish Child Safe Officer and Clergy in the implementation this policy and related safe ministry documentation within their parish or AAC.

Parish Child Safety Officer

- Oversees child safety and wellbeing in the implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the Child Safety Policy for Children, the Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Procedure and related safe ministry and child safety documentation, including by keeping records for screening, training and risk management in the parish or AAC.
- Acts as the primary contact person for child safety in the parish or AAC.

6. Resources, procedures and fact sheets for policy implementation published on the Diocesan website

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Policy for Children
- Code of Conduct for Child Safety & Wellbeing
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Procedure
- Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Clearance for Ministry information
- Clearance for Service information
- Kooyoora reporting guidelines
- Mandatory reporting fact sheet
- Person of Concern Protocol
- OHS resources for parishes
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Management Procedure
- Safe Ministry Toolbox - fact sheets, forms and resources
- Protecting God's Children booklet
- Family Violence policy, procedures and guidelines for church workers
- Reporting concerns related to the Archbishop

7. 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
- Faithfulness in Service
- Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Communion
- Persons of Concern Policy – Guidelines for Implementation June 2017

8. Victorian legislation and other documents

- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Wrongs Act 1958
- Worker Screening Act 2020
- Crimes Act 1958
  - Failure to Protect
  - Failure to Disclose
  - Grooming Offence
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
  - Child Safe Standards
  - Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 (Vic)

9. Definitions and Terminology

Abuse: means bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse or spiritual (see section 3 of the *Professional Standards Uniform Act* 2016 (Anglican Diocese of Melbourne)).

Child, children or **young person:** means anyone under the age of 18 years, unless otherwise defined by law or noted in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Abuse or harm: means conduct towards, against, with or in the presence of a person, or threatening to engage in such conduct which includes: bullying, emotional and psychological abuse, harassment, neglect, physical abuse, family violence, sexual abuse, spiritual abuse and grooming.

Clergy: means collectively all clerks resident in the Diocese or licensed by the Archbishop.

Diocese: the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne.

Director of Episcopal Standards: has the meaning in Part 7 of the Episcopal Standards Act 2015.

Discrimination: has the meaning in Part 2 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic).

Misconduct: has the meaning in section 5 of the *Professional Standards Uniform Act* 2016 (Anglican Diocese of Melbourne).

Racism: means discrimination on the basis of a person's race, as defined in the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic).

Safe Ministry Reference Group: a reference group to ensure policy, procedures and guidelines are maintained and reviewed, and to provide advice and recommendations to Archbishop in Council.

Parish Child Safety Officer: a person responsible for child safety communication and administration in a parish under this policy. This person is the local contact for the diocesan safe ministry staff. It is a role that may be undertaken by a member of parish council or someone appointed by the parish council.

10. Review and Improvement

The Safe Ministry Reference Committee is responsible for reviewing this policy every second year and for making any recommendations for amendments to the Archbishop in Council. The review process will provide an opportunity for the Church community to contribute.

A review may also occur if any incident arises that breaches this policy. The review will suggest any amendments to ensure the policy remains relevant, accessible and effective.