



# Anglican Diocese of The Murray

<b>Policy:</b>	<b>Safe Ministry v1.0</b>		
<b>Body adopting policy:</b>	Diocesan Council	<b>Date of adoption or last review:</b>	2021
<b>Related Documents:</b>		<b>Review schedule:</b>	Every 5 years

## 1. BACKGROUND AND GOVERNANCE

This policy outlines the underlying principles that direct our approach to safeguarding vulnerable people involved with the Anglican Diocese of The Murray.

It applies to all people in the Diocese who participate in our programs, including all Church Workers<sup>1</sup>, which includes clergy, paid employees, and lay volunteers, as well as participants in church activities (“Church Workers”).

## 2. COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARD VULNERABLE PEOPLE

2.1. We are responsible and accountable for fulfilling our obligations under State and Federal law to protect children and vulnerable people. We require Church Workers to:

2.1.1. report their concern, on reasonable grounds, that a person has suffered or is likely to suffer harm, to any of the following:

2.1.2. the Department of Child Protection,

2.1.3. SA Police,

2.1.4. The Professional Standards Director; and

2.1.5. Minister or Bishop;

assist the aforementioned authorities with investigations into reported incidents of harm in the Diocese;

2.2. We are committed to ensuring that vulnerable people (including children, families, the disabled and elderly) are informed and involved in decisions that considerably affect them and will respond promptly to any other concern related to the safety of children or other vulnerable persons in the Diocese.

2.3. We will:

2.3.1. offer Redress and support to any person who has suffered harm in our programs or on our sites; and

2.3.2. take all reasonable and legal steps to prevent any person known to have harmed children or other vulnerable persons from gaining access to children or vulnerable persons in our programs or on our sites.

2.4. We acknowledge the role of children and disabled persons in their own safety. We will listen to the safety concerns of children and disabled persons, respond to those concerns as appropriate and communicate with them about matters related to this policy with sensitivity to age, ability and culture.

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<sup>1</sup> As defined in the Professional Standards Ordinance 2016.

### **3. EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND CHILDREN**

- 3.1. We encourage and respect the views of children and young people. We involve children and young people in decision making and listen and act upon any feedback or complaints that children, young people or their families/carers raise with us.
- 3.2. We recognise the diverse needs of vulnerable people should be taken into account and that their concerns be taken seriously. We are committed to embedding this care into all levels of our leadership and culture.
- 3.3. We ensure that children, young people and their families/carers know their rights and how to access services, advice and the complaints processes available to them.

### **4. COMMITMENT TO SCREENING AND TRAINING LEADERS**

- 4.1. We are committed to ensuring all church workers who are 'working with children' or doing 'child related work' are screened, appropriately supported and trained.
- 4.2. To ensure compliance with both South Australian State legislation and the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 the following list of roles are defined as church workers who are 'working with children' or doing 'child related work' and therefore must obtain a safe ministry clearance:
  - 4.2.1. All clergy and lay persons holding an Authority from the Bishop.
  - 4.2.2. All candidates for ordination.
  - 4.2.3. All lay church workers in paid employment involving ministry to children.
  - 4.2.4. All lay volunteers who work with children.
  - 4.2.5. All members of Diocesan Council.
  - 4.2.6. Members of Councils, Boards and committees which have the power to manage aspects of Synod's affairs involving ministry to children.
  - 4.2.7. Members of Parish Councils only where the Parish concerned has lay paid staff or volunteers who work with children.
- 4.3. We require all who hold these roles in the Diocese to:
  - 4.3.1. abide by '*Faithfulness in Service: A National Code for Personal Behaviour and the Practice of Pastoral Ministry by Clergy and Church Workers*' (Code of Conduct 'Faithfulness in Service') and behave as followers of Jesus and be willing to be held accountable for their behaviour;
  - 4.3.2. have their State "Working With Children Check" (WWCC) verified;
  - 4.3.3. provide referees who can confirm they are suitable to work with vulnerable people and that there is no reason they should not be appointed in such a role;
  - 4.3.4. complete an approved Safe Ministry Training Course or other appropriate training which outlines appropriate behaviour including how to minimise the chances of harm, as well as training in how to identify and report cases of harm, every three years

- 4.4. Members of advisory committees or committees which carry out a narrow specific area of the Synod's business (e.g. FAI etc) **but do not** have responsibility for carrying on the Synod's business as a whole would **not** be required to undertake a WWCC (assuming that those individuals are not otherwise required to obtain a WWCC).
- 4.5. A person will not be held to be performing 'child-related work' if they are performing any other service or activity in the course of which contact with children occurs incidentally or would not reasonably be expected to occur.
- 4.6. A WWCC is not required in relation to a person who believes on reasonable grounds that they will not 'work with children' on more than seven days in a calendar year (unless that person does 'work with children' on more than seven days (i.e. once they have 'worked with children' on more than seven days, they will need to obtain a WWCC).
- 4.7. We are also committed to ensuring all church workers who are 'working with vulnerable people' are screened, appropriately supported and trained.
- 4.8. We require all who are working with vulnerable people in the Diocese to:
  - 4.8.1. abide by '*Faithfulness in Service: A National Code for Personal Behaviour and the Practice of Pastoral Ministry by Clergy and Church Workers*' (Code of Conduct 'Faithfulness in Service') and behave as followers of Jesus and be willing to be held accountable for their behaviour;
  - 4.8.2. have their State "vulnerable person-related employment check" verified;
  - 4.8.3. provide referees who can confirm they are suitable to work with vulnerable people and that there is no reason they should not be appointed in such a role;
  - 4.8.4. complete an approved Safe Ministry Training Course or other appropriate training which outlines appropriate behaviour including how to minimise the chances of harm and risk of harm, as well as training in how to identify and report cases of harm, every three years.

## **5. COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMS**

We are committed to ensuring that our programs and events are safe and appropriate for those attending. Careful consideration must be given to the activities chosen, the venue, safe ratios of supervision, appropriate toileting practices, transportation, work health and safety, parental or guardian permission and confidentiality of records kept.

## **6. COMMITMENT TO APPROPRIATELY RESPOND TO CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS**

We are committed to creating a culture where people feel safe to speak out about inappropriate behaviour without fear of being rejected or ridiculed. We are committed to listening and responding appropriately to concerns and complaints about behaviour and safety. We are committed to protecting the confidentiality, dignity, health and well-being of all individuals involved.

## **7. IDENTIFY, REPORT AND RESPOND TO SUSPECTED CHILD HARM AND RISK OF HARM**

- 7.1. We will ensure that all leaders and church workers who are working with children or doing child related work:
  - 7.1.1. are able to identify, report and respond to children and young people at risk of harm; and
  - 7.1.2. understand their obligations to notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 immediately if they have a suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child and young person has or is being harmed or risk of harm.

- 7.2. Workers who are mandated notifiers as per the Children and Young People (Safety) Act (2017) have access to the following relevant information resources:

Mandated notifiers and their role:

<https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse/mandated-notifiers-and-their-role>

[https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/107099/mandatory-reporting-guide.pdf](https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/107099/mandatory-reporting-guide.pdf)

Department for Child Protection reporting child abuse website:

<https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse/report-child-abuse-or-neglect>

- 7.3. We recognise that support may be required for the child or young person when a notification is made and will identify appropriate services for the child, young person and/or their family.
- 7.4. Failure by mandated professionals and workers to report a reasonable suspicion that a child has or is being harmed or at risk of harm may result in disciplinary action being initiated against the worker. Failure by mandated notifiers to report is also an offence under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act (2017) and carries a maximum penalty of a \$10,000 fine.

## **8. PROFESSIONAL PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR CHURCH WORKERS**

### **8.1. Protection Under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act (2017)**

Reporters of harm or risk of harm will not be held legally liable for the report or any investigation of the report if a report is made in good faith and does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics. Mandated notifiers are also protected from threats, intimidation, damage, loss or disadvantage because they have reported or propose to report suspected harm or risk of harm of a child or young person.

- 8.2. Disclosure of the name or any identifying information in relation to a person who has made a report to the Child Abuse Report Line will not be made unless:

- 8.2.1. the reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or family;
- 8.2.2. the reporter consents, in writing that their identity can be disclosed;
- 8.2.3. the case proceeds to court. In these circumstances the source of the information may be provided in evidence to the court; or
- 8.2.4. the identity of the reporter may be provided to a service if there is significant concern for the wellbeing of the child; however, the other service will not disclose the reporter's identity to others.

## **9. COMMUNICATION**

We will ensure that this policy is publicly available on the Anglican Diocese of The Murray's website and that all parishioners, leaders and carers/families are informed of the policy and how to access it.

## 10. RESPONSIBILITIES

10.1. All church workers will comply with all elements of the policy in their own spheres of responsibility. In addition, the following individuals and groups will fulfil these specific responsibilities:

### 10.2. The Bishop

The Bishop holds responsibility for safety in the Diocese, which will be promoted by:

10.2.1. leading compliance with this policy in all the governance bodies the Bishop chairs, including Synod, Diocesan Council and committees (and in the Bishop's Office);

10.2.2. recruiting, inducting and supporting all licenced Church Workers according to Diocesan procedures; and

10.2.3. assisting others with their responsibilities as appropriate (see below).

### 10.3. Diocesan Council

Diocesan Council will assist the Bishop fulfil responsibility for safety by:

10.3.1. ensuring a robust safe ministry compliance program is implemented and managed effectively;

10.3.2. approving Safe Ministry regulations (including this policy);

10.3.3. ensuring church workers complete appropriate Safe Ministry training programs; and

10.3.4. requiring Parishes to appoint a Safe Ministry Coordinator.

### 10.4. The Registrar

The Registrar will help the Bishop fulfil responsibility for safety by:

10.4.1. making all documentation related to this policy available to Church Workers and the public;

10.4.2. communicating targeted, relevant, specific information about this policy across the Diocese;

10.4.3. maintaining records relevant to this policy according to the Privacy Policy;

10.4.4. conducting a review of this policy and compliance with it every three years;

10.4.5. monitoring compliance with this policy in Parishes via monthly returns and incidental queries; and

10.4.6. reporting on compliance with this policy to the Bishop, Diocesan Council and Synod.

### 10.5. The Priest in Charge<sup>2</sup>

Under the Bishop, the Priest in Charge holds responsibility for safety in their Parishes, which they will promote by:

10.5.1. participating in Safe Ministry training for ministry leaders as approved by Diocesan Council;

10.5.2. ensuring the Parish Council appoints a Safe Ministry Coordinator to aid compliance with this policy in the Parish;

10.5.3. reporting on Safe Ministry to the Bishop, Registrar and Safety Coordinator via periodic returns; and

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<sup>2</sup> In a Vacancy, either the Vicar General, Archdeacon or an appointed Locum will oversee this section.

10.5.4. maintaining appropriate records for their parish.

10.6. Parish Councils

The Parish Council will appoint a Safe Ministry Coordinator and will help the Parish Priest fulfil their responsibilities for safety by:

- 10.6.1. reviewing ministry programs and events, considering duty of care and foreseeable risks;
- 10.6.2. ensuring that Diocesan-approved Safe Ministry signage is posted in the Parish;
- 10.6.3. receive periodic reports on Safe Ministry;
- 10.6.4. ensuring a Safe Ministry Coordinator is appointed and supported to aid compliance with this policy in the Parish.

10.7. Safe Ministry Coordinator

The Safe Ministry Coordinator will help the Parish Priest fulfil responsibility for safety by:

- 10.7.1. assisting the Parish Priest with their responsibilities in this policy as appropriate (see above);
- 10.7.2. assisting parish volunteers in working out whether they are legally required to undergo a WWCC;
- 10.7.3. keeping records of who is working with children in the church setting;
- 10.7.4. keeping local records of who has WWCC (will be updated regularly by Synod Office);
- 10.7.5. ensuring no one 'works with children' unless they have Synod approval; and
- 10.7.6. forward regular compliance reports to the safe ministry authority (Diocesan Council via the Secretary of Synod)

10.8. Church Workers (Paid and Unpaid, Ordained and Lay)

Church Workers will help the Parish Priest or other relevant leader fulfil their responsibilities for safety by:

- 10.8.1. participating in Safe Ministry training approved by Diocesan Council as often as required;
- 10.8.2. when leading any program involving children or other vulnerable persons, providing a safety briefing, drawing attention to signage related to Safe Ministry;
- 10.8.3. when leading or helping with any program involving children or other vulnerable persons, promoting open communication with participants, parents and other caregivers on safety matters; and
- 10.8.4. refrain from taking and/or distributing photographs of children or other vulnerable persons in ministry programs without the permission of the program leader and the relevant parent(s) or caregiver(s).

## **11. RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND ORGANISATIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

### 11.1. Legislation

- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 1993 (South Australia)
- Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (South Australia)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)

### 11.2. Related **Policies and Procedures**

- 'Faithfulness in Service: A National Code for Personal Behaviour and the Practice of Pastoral Ministry by Clergy and Church Workers'

### 11.3. References **(to other key documents, internal or external)**

- Child Safe Environments – Principles of Good Practice (issued by the Chief Executive of the South Australian Department for Education and Child Development).

## **12. POLICY REVIEW**

This Policy will be reviewed at least every five years.