



Anglican Diocese of The Murray

Policy:	Safe Ministry v1.3		
Body adopting policy:	Diocesan Council	Date of adoption or last review:	December 2021
Related Documents:		Review schedule:	December 2026

BACKGROUND AND GOVERNANCE

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

It applies to all Church Workers in the Diocese who participate in our programs.

1. DEFINITIONS

1.1. "Church Worker" means a person who is or who at any relevant time was:

- 1.1.1. The Bishop
- 1.1.2. All clergy and lay persons holding an Authority from the Bishop.
- 1.1.3. All candidates for ordination.
- 1.1.4. All lay church workers in paid employment involving ministry to children.
- 1.1.5. All lay volunteers who work with children.
- 1.1.6. All members of Diocesan Council.
- 1.1.7. Members of Parish Councils, Boards and committees which have the power to manage aspects of Synod's affairs involving ministry to children.
- 1.1.8. All members of Synod

1.2. "All Church Workers" means all the people listed under 1.1

1.3. "Children and Young People" means any person under the age of 18

1.4. "Vulnerable People" means any other person who is disabled, disadvantaged or elderly.

1.5. "Registrar" means a person in paid employment of the Synod appointed to the position by Diocesan Council

1.6. "DHS WWCC" means a Department of Human Services Working with Children Check.

1.7. "Safe Ministry Clearance" includes a Not Prohibited Working with Children Check, satisfactory National Police Check, follow the National Principles for Child Safe Environments and where necessary completion of a safe ministry check questionnaire, and a signed acknowledgement of the acceptance of the various requirements to be submitted to the Registrar.

2. COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

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

- 2.1.1. report their concern immediately if they have a suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has or is being harmed or at risk of harm to:
 - 2.1.1.1. the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78
 - 2.1.1.2. the SA Police on 000 (if child or young person is at immediate risk),
- 2.1.2. assist the aforementioned authorities with investigations into reported incidents of harm in the Diocese;

2.1.3. notify the Bishop or Professional Standards Director.

2.2. We are committed to ensuring that vulnerable people (including children, young people, 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 and young people 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 and young people or vulnerable persons in our programs or on our sites.

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

3. EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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 by providing information to the various churches and displaying this on the Diocesan Website.

3.2. We recognise that the diverse needs of children, young people and vulnerable people will 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 by providing information to the various churches and displaying this on the Diocesan Website.

4. COMMITMENT TO SCREENING AND TRAINING LEADERS

4.1. We are committed to ensuring all church workers over the age of 14 years who are 'working with children' or doing 'child related work' have a Not Prohibited Working with Children Check, and are 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 Not Prohibited Working with Children Check:

4.2.1. The Bishop

4.2.2. All clergy and lay persons holding an Authority from the Bishop.

4.2.3. All candidates for ordination.

4.2.4. All lay church workers in paid employment involving ministry to children.

4.2.5. All lay volunteers who work with children.

4.2.6. All members of Diocesan Council.

4.2.7. Members of Parish Councils, Boards and committees which have the power to manage aspects of Synod's affairs involving ministry to children.

4.2.8. All members of Synod

- 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 "DHS Working With Children Check" (DHS WWCC) verified by providing proof to the Registrar; The Registrar will contact immediately the DHS Screening Unit when we become aware of certain information regarding any person's involvement with our organisation, including any serious criminal offence, child protection information, or disciplinary or misconduct information.
 - 4.3.3. this will be provided every 5 years and they cannot commence working with children unless a DHS WWCC has been sighted.
 - 4.3.4. provide referees who can confirm they are suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable people and that there is no reason they should not be appointed in such a role by completing the Safe Ministry Check Questionnaire and supplying it to the Registrar;
 - 4.3.5. 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 DHS WWCC (assuming that those individuals are not otherwise required to obtain a DHS 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 unless they are supervising someone who works with Children and Young People in which case they must obtain a DHS WWCC.
- 4.6. A DHS 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. However on the 8th day work must cease until they obtain a DHS WWCC.
- 4.7. We are also committed to ensuring all church workers who are 'working with children, young people and vulnerable people' complete a Safe Ministry Check questionnaire, appropriately supported and trained.
- 4.8. We require all who are working with children, young people and 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" or have a Not Prohibited Working with Children Check verified by the Registrar;
 - 4.8.3. provide referees who can confirm they are suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable people and that there is no reason they should not be appointed in such a role by completing Safe Ministry Check Questionnaire and supplying it to the Registrar;
 - 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 HARM AND RISK OF HARM TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

7.1. We will ensure that all leaders and church workers who are working with children and young people or doing related work for children and young people:

7.1.1. are able to identify, report and respond to children and young people at risk of harm or being harmed; 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 is at 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

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 notifiers 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 to 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 Officer.

- 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 five years, unless an incident causes an earlier revision;
- 10.4.5. monitoring compliance with this policy in Parishes via quarterly returns and incidental queries; and
- 10.4.6. reporting on compliance with this policy to the Bishop, Diocesan Council and Synod.
- 10.4.7. responsible for lodging a new child safe compliance statement when policies have been reviewed or every 5 years – whichever occurs first

10.5. The Diocesan Safe Ministry Officer

The Diocesan Council will appoint a Diocesan Safe Ministry Officer who will help the Registrar and Parish Safe Ministry Officers by:

- 10.5.1. assisting the Registrar with his or her responsibilities in this policy as appropriate (see above);
- 10.5.2. assisting Parish Safe Ministry Officers fulfil their responsibilities.

10.6. The Priest in Charge¹

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

- 10.6.1. participating in Safe Ministry training for ministry leaders as approved by Diocesan Council;
- 10.6.2. ensuring the Parish Council appoints a Safe Ministry Officer to aid compliance with this policy in the Parish;
- 10.6.3. reporting on Safe Ministry to the Bishop and Registrar via periodic returns; and
- 10.6.4. maintaining appropriate records for their parish.

10.7. Parish Councils

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

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

10.8. Safe Ministry Officer

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

- 10.8.1. assisting the Parish Priest with their responsibilities in this policy as appropriate (see above);
- 10.8.2. assisting parish volunteers in working out whether they are legally required to undergo a DHS WWCC;
- 10.8.3. keeping records of who is working with children in the church setting;
- 10.8.4. keeping local records of who has DHS WWCC (will be updated regularly by Synod Office);
- 10.8.5. ensuring no one 'works with children' unless they have a Not Prohibited DHS WWCC; and
- 10.8.6. forward regular compliance reports to the safe ministry authority (Diocesan Council via the Secretary of Synod)

¹ In a Vacancy, either the Vicar General, Archdeacon or an appointed Locum will oversee this section.

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

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

- 10.9.1. participating in Safe Ministry training approved by Diocesan Council as often as required;
- 10.9.2. when leading any program involving children young people or other vulnerable persons, providing a safety briefing, drawing attention to signage related to Safe Ministry;
- 10.9.3. when leading or helping with any program involving children and young people or other vulnerable persons, promoting open communication with participants, parents and other caregivers on safety matters; and
- 10.9.4. refrain from taking and/or distributing photographs of children and young people 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 2017
- 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'
- Safe Ministry Check Questionnaire

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

- National Principles for Child Safe Environments.

12. POLICY REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed at least every five years.