



| <b>Safe Ministry Policy</b>  |                  |  |                              |
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| <b>Body adopting policy:</b> | Diocesan Council | <b>Date Of adoption or last review</b> | 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2020 |
| <b>Related Documents</b>     |                  | <b>Review schedule:</b>                | Every 5 years                |

## **BACKGROUND AND GOVERNANCE**

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

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”).

## **COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARD VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

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:

1. report their concern, on reasonable grounds, that a person has suffered or is likely to suffer harm, to any of the following:
  1. the Department of Child Protection (if a child),
  2. SA Police
  3. The Professional Standards Director; and
  4. Senior Minister or Bishop;
2. assist the aforementioned authorities with investigations into reported incidents of abuse in the Diocese.

We are committed to ensuring that vulnerable people (including children, persons living with a disability and the 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.

We will:

1. offer Redress and Support to any person who has suffered abuse in our programs or on our sites; and
2. take all reasonable and legal steps to prevent any person known to have abused children or other vulnerable persons from gaining access to children or vulnerable persons in our programs or on our sites.

We acknowledge the role of vulnerable persons in their own safety. We will listen to the safety concerns of 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.

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<sup>1</sup> As defined in the Professional Standards Ordinance 2015.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

We are committed to ensuring all church workers who are involved with vulnerable people are screened, appropriately supported and trained.

To ensure compliance with both South Australian State Legislation and the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2018 the following church workers are deemed to be 'work with children' or doing 'child related work' and therefore must obtain a working with children check:

1. All clergy and lay persons holding a license from the Bishop.
2. All candidates for ordination.
3. All lay church workers in paid employment involving ministry to children.
4. All lay volunteers who work with children.
5. All members of Diocesan Council
6. Members of Parish Councils only where the parish concerned has lay paid staff or volunteers who work with children.

We require all who hold these roles in the Diocese to:

- a) 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' as adopted in the diocese) and behave as followers of Jesus and be willing to be held accountable for their behaviour;
- b) Have their state "Working With Children Check" (WWCC) verified;
- c) 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;
- d) Complete an approved Safe Ministry Training Course or other appropriate training which outlines appropriate behaviour including how to minimise the chance of harm and abuse, as well as training in how to identify and report cases of abuse, every three years.

A person will not be held to be performing 'child-related work' if they are performing a service or activity in the course of which contact with children occurs incidentally or would not reasonably be expected to occur.

A WWC 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. one they have 'worked with children' on more than seven days they will need to obtain a WWCC)

## **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.

## **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 individuals involved.

## **IDENTIFY, REPORT AND RESPOND TO SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

We will ensure that all leaders and church workers who are working with children or doing child related work:

- are able to identify, report and respond to children and young people at risk of harm; and
- 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 abused or neglected.

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-or-neglect>

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.

Failure by mandated professionals and workers to report a reasonable suspicion that a child has or is being abused or neglected 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.

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

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

Reporters of abuse or neglect 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 abuse or neglect of a child or young person.

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:

- The reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or family;
- The reporter consents, in writing that their identity can be disclosed;

- The case proceeds to court. In these circumstances the source of the information may be provided in evidence to the court; or
- 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.

## COMMUNICATION

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

### The Bishop

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

- leading compliance with this policy in the governance bodies the Bishop chairs, including Synod, Diocesan Council and committees (and in the Bishop's Office);
- recruiting, inducting and supporting all licensed Church Workers according to Diocesan procedures; and
- assisting others with their responsibilities as appropriate (see below).

### Diocesan Council

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

- ensuring a robust safe ministry compliance program is implemented and managed effectively;
- approving Safe Ministry regulations (including the policy; and
- ensuring church workers complete appropriate Safe Ministry training programs.

### Registrar

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

- making all documentation related to this policy available to Church Workers and the Public;
- communicating targeted, relevant, specific information about this policy across the diocese;
- maintaining records relevant to this policy according to the Privacy Policy
- conducting a review of this policy and compliance with it every five years;
- monitoring compliance with this policy in the Parishes via monthly returns and incidental queries; and
- reporting on compliance with this policy to the Bishop, Diocesan Council and Synod.

### Senior Ministers, Ministry District and Parish Priests

Under the Bishop, the Senior Minister holds responsibility for safety in their Parishes and Ministry Districts which they will promote by:

- participating in Safe Ministry training for ministry leaders as approved by Diocesan Council;
- appointing a Safe Ministry Coordinator to aid compliance with this policy in the Parish or Ministry District;
- reporting on Safe Ministry to the Bishop, Registrar and Safety Coordinator via periodic returns; and
- maintaining appropriate records for their Parish.

### Parish Councils/Ministry District Committees

Parish Council will help the Parish or Ministry District Priest fulfil their responsibilities for safety by:

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

### Safe Ministry Coordinator

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

- a. assisting the Parish or Ministry District Priest with their responsibilities in this policy as appropriate (see above);
- b. assisting volunteers in working out whether they are legally required to undergo a WWCC;
- c. keeping records of who is working with children in the church setting;
- d. keeping local records of who has WWCC (will be updated regularly by Synod Office);
- e. ensuring no one 'works with children' unless they have Synod approval; and
- f. forward regular compliance reports to the safe ministry authority (Diocesan Council via the Registrar).

#### 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:

- a. participating in Safe Ministry training approved by Diocesan Council as often as required;
- b. when leading any program involving children or other vulnerable persons, providing a safety briefing, drawing attention to signage related to Safe Ministry;
- c. when leading or helping with any program involving children or other vulnerable persons, promoting open communication with participants, parents and caregivers on safety matters; and
- d. 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).

### **RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND ORGANISATIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

#### **Legislation**

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

#### **Related Policies and Procedures**

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

#### **References (to other key document, 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).

### **POLICY REVIEW**

This Policy will be reviewed at least every five years.

#### **Schedule**

Policy approved by Diocesan Council by resolution on