



ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF
CANBERRA & GOULBURN

SAFE COMMUNITIES OF FAITH POLICY

August 2015

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Our Diocese is committed to holistic Safe Ministries. This means: we commit to our pastoral, insurance, legal and duty of care obligations; with its goal that all ministries are spiritually, emotionally and physically safe; based on the premise that Diocesan parishes, ministries and entities should be abuse-free and harm-free, person valuing and respectful spaces for ministry to God's glory.

This Safe Communities of Faith policy outlines the broad policy statements and protocols incorporated in the Safe Ministries area and it is underpinned by the Diocesan Code of Good Practice.

This Policy and Code are underpinned by the Scripture:

Jesus Christ said, "Love your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and love your neighbour as yourself."

These commands guide our behaviour in our relationships and provide the basis for the establishment and exercising of safe activities and events, run in safe environments in an abuse-free Christian community.

We seek to build and maintain safe communities of faith by:

- fostering relationships between members, and those of the wider community, based on the teachings of Jesus Christ;
- providing a safe and secure environment where all people can feel respected;
- providing responsible and loving Christian leadership and management practices built on a scriptural base, and
- ensuring that any cases of alleged abuse, neglect or grievances and complaints are handled in a consistent, unbiased and thorough manner.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The clergy and ministry unit council, and those in authority in other diocesan agencies, are responsible for ensuring that: as far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that all church workers and those accessing ministries conducted by the ministry unit comply with the Work Health & Safety Act 2011
- all reasonable and practicable steps are taken to avoid risks of physical and psychological of harm to members of the church and wider community arising from their involvement in any ministry;
- all persons in leadership positions, especially those relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults are appropriately authorised and suitably qualified, trained and supervised
- on an annual basis, they remind all members of the ministry unit of the spirit, intent and procedures associated with this policy and their responsibilities within it;
- all church workers have agreed to adhere to the Diocesan Code of Good Practice.

SAFE LEADERS

We commit to:

- assessing the suitability of leaders before they are appointed in ministry positions to children, young people and ministries to vulnerable adults by following the Diocesan Due Diligence Protocol covering: recruiting, screening and appointing of leaders;
- ongoing training, supervision of, and support for leaders.

We require for all clergy, leaders of children, young people and ministries to vulnerable adults, wardens and ministry unit councillors:

- to undertake a Diocesan Creating Safe Ministries or SCTA endorsed workshop and refresher sessions;
- that they attend additional ministry-specific training as required by churches and Diocesan agencies (eg. SRE teachers);
- that they report disclosure or suspicions of child or elder abuse or neglect, using Diocesan Guidelines for Reporting;
- that, if a grievance or complaint is made against a leader, the relevant Diocesan protocol* will be followed.

SAFE PROGRAMS

a. Safe emotional environments

- We encourage all people to provide input into the programs and activities in which they are to participate, by valuing and fostering their ideas, and encouraging participation in the life of the church.
- We will follow the Diocesan privacy policy in respect to information relating to program participants, (including health and family situation),
- We require those in ministry leadership to be nurturing and affirming in their ministry interactions with those they minister to and with.

b. Safe physical environments

- Leaders will establish and maintain physically safe ministry environments. Forms, checklists and templates to assist this are provided in the Church Leadership Implementation Pack.
- Ministry Co-ordinators will ensure that the following areas are incorporated into establishing and maintaining a safe physical environment: fire safety, building safety, first aid; food safety practices; risk assessment for activities and environments; adequate ministry supervision for activities; transport protocols; critical incident and emergency protocols and ministry program review.

TERMINOLOGY

Child: means a person who is under the age of 12 years.

Young Person: means a person who is 12 years but less than 18 years.

Vulnerable Adult: means an adult at a higher risk of abuse due to their mental health, disability, age or life circumstance.

Ministry Co-ordinator: means a person who is responsible for a ministry area. It is a role that may be undertaken by Rectors, Wardens or other senior leaders. They may be responsible for one program or they may be responsible for several programs under a general area

Safe Program: means a program in which its risks have been assessed and the events have been thought through and planned and ministry approval has been given by senior church leadership (Clergy & Ministry Unit Council)

Church Worker: means a church or church agency worker who is a member of clergy or lay person (paid or voluntary) appointed or elected to a position of leadership or responsibility in the Diocese.

Grievance: means but is not limited to:

- a disagreement between two or more people one of whom is a member of a Ministry Unit in this Diocese,
- a perceived offence caused by a member of a Ministry Unit in this Diocese; or
- a dissatisfaction with the manner in which a church worker who is licensed or employed by a Church Authority in this Diocese has fulfilled his or her ministry role and includes a breach of the Code of Good Practice which is not a serious breach

Complaint: means a claim that:

- a person claims that a member of the clergy or a licensed lay person has committed a serious breach of a term of his or her licence,
- a person claims that a member of the clergy or a licensed lay person has taught doctrine that is contrary to the Doctrines of this Church or has otherwise committed any breach of faith, ritual, ceremonial or discipline,

LEGISLATION & REGULATIONS

The following legislation is particularly relevant to ensuring a safe ministry community:

NSW: Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998

- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013

ACT: Children & Young People Act 2008

- Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011

NATIONAL:

- Aged Care Act 1997
- Community Visitors Grant Amendment Principles 2006
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

MORE INFORMATION

More information is available through the Diocesan website, www.anglicancg.org.au

- Responding to Abuse Policy
- Code of Good Practice
- Professional Standards Ordinance 2004
- Protocol for Addressing Grievances*
- Due Diligence Protocol
- Creating Safe Ministries Program
- Church Leadership Implementation Pack
- Protecting People/ Protecting Property

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REPORTING ABUSE HOTLINE: 1800 070 511