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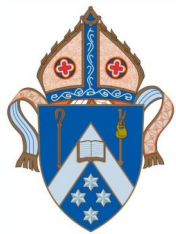
Safe Ministry Essentials Level 1 Training



PRODUCED BY

creating

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The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne ('ADOM') **Safe Ministry Essentials (Level 1 Training Course) Booklet** aims to assist Diocesan church workers in understanding their pastoral and Diocesan responsibilities and legal obligations towards Safe Ministry (i.e. God-honouring, life-giving, harm-free ministry).

We recognise that Safe Ministry is not achieved only through the establishment and maintenance of good governance, training, policy and procedures but also through the implementation of the policy, procedures and practices.

This Booklet has been customised to include reference to, and extracts from, Anglican Canons, ADOM Acts, Regulations, Policies, Guidelines, and Kooyoora process documentation. It is produced by **Creating Safer Communities** and used by permission for the **Anglican Diocese of Melbourne**.

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Unless otherwise stated, all Bible verses quoted are from the New International Version 2011.

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Currently (May 2023) **Creating Safer Communities** provides Safe Ministry training materials to:

- Australian Christian Churches
- C3 Church Australia
- Anglican Dioceses: Melbourne, Northern Territory, North Western Australia, Gippsland, Bendigo, Rockhampton, Bunbury, Ballaratt, Bathurst, Perth, and Canberra & Goulburn.
- Baptist Churches Western Australia
- Christian Venues Association Australia
- International Network of Churches (INC)
and a number of individual churches, not captured by the denominational groups above.

For more information visit www.safercommunities.net.au

Disclaimer

This publication is not legal advice. The ideas and procedures herein are based on nationally recognised good practice advice for Safe Ministry and have been written with due regard to Australian legislation in 2023.

Updated 22 May 2023

1. Commitment to Safe Ministry

“As a community walking in Jesus’ footsteps, we follow 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 Anglican Church of Australia within the Diocese of Melbourne is committed to child safe practice. The safety and the wellbeing of children and vulnerable people are embedded in policies and practices which reflect a commitment to zero tolerance of abuse.” (Diocesan website)



Safe Ministry refers to church events, programs, experiences and interactions conducted in a God-honouring, life-giving and harm-free manner.

This is outworked as all people at church fulfil their pastoral and Diocesan responsibilities, and legal obligations. This often feels like wearing many ‘hats’ at once (as pictured left). These hats can often feel as though they are in conflict e.g. pastoral -vs- legal -vs- Diocesan responses to misconduct. Our ongoing task is ensure all our responsibilities and obligations are fulfilled.

1.a Pastoral

Our pastoral responsibilities set us apart from all other organisations who provide services, events and programs. We are more than a club, a school or a social gathering. We are the body of Christ, called to be ‘salt’ and ‘light’ in the world. We live out Jesus’ new commandment that we love one another, so that by this, all people will know that we are His disciples (John 13:34-35). Our motivation for Safe Ministry is more than a risk management exercise and legal responsibility, rather it is an outworking of what James 1:27 calls “true religion” i.e. caring for the vulnerable (widows and orphans); and an expression of Micah 6:8 “to seek justice, love mercy and walk humbly before our God”.



1.b Legal

Australia has a high commitment to safety for all people, expressed in legislation and government policy relating to child and vulnerable people protection.

In general the church needs to ensure that it: fulfils its duty of care; cultivates an environment that is free from violence and exploitation; fosters people’s health as well as developmental and spiritual needs (e.g. self-respect and dignity); ensures that all workers act safely and are kept safe, and has a process for responding to grievances and allegations of abuse and misconduct (including child protection and sexual harassment).

Victoria has specific laws to protect people such as: child protection, child safe standards working with children, sexual harassment, sexual consent, change or suppression (Conversion) practices prohibition Act and laws relating to health and safety, to name a few.

The Victorian Child Safe Standards (2022) legislation requires all staff & volunteers (not just those working with children) receive, as a minimum, training & information in:

- The effective implementation of the organisation’s Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Recognising the indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.
- Responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support

- colleagues who disclose harm.
- Building culturally safe environments for children and young people.
(CS Standard 8.1-4 Source: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/>)

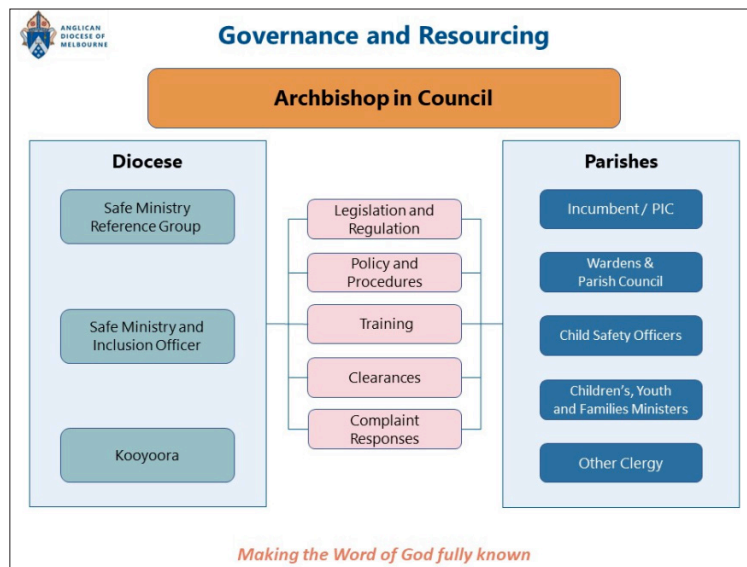
1.c Diocesan

We are committed to the safety of all people in our parishes and agencies. This commitment includes implementation of the Anglican General Synod Canons in relation to Safe Ministry and our Diocesan Acts, regulations, ordinances, policies, protocols, and human resourcing for Safe Ministry and Professional Standards.

Everyone, including Diocesan leadership, clergy, parish councils, ministry leaders and the wider congregation has a vital role to play in Safe Ministry.

Keeping people safe is everybody's business!

This diagram provides an overview of the governance and resourcing for Safe Ministry in the Diocese.



Diocesan Contacts

Kooyoora - Office of Professional Standards

P: +61 3 9416 1008 or 1800 135 246 E: contact@kooyoora.org.au

Safe Ministry and Inclusion Officer

P: +61 3 9653 4220

E: safeministry@melbourneanglican.org.au

Safe Ministry section of the Diocesan website

The *Making Your Parish Safe* section of the Diocesan website provides our documentation and implementation assistance.

Safe Ministry training: The Diocese has three levels of role specific Safe Ministry training aimed at building awareness in the concepts of Safe Ministry and Diocesan policy, procedures and pacts.

Diocesan insurance: All insurance questions are to be referred to the Diocesan Insurance Department.

2. Safe Ministry foundations



Safe Ministry is God-honouring, life-giving, harm-free ministry programs, events and interactions. It includes everyone, from kids to adults.

It applies to all ministry experiences, events, programs and interactions. Its focus is people, and it is concerned with spiritual, physical and emotional wellbeing, participation and safety.

Everyone must do all they can to ensure that all people are included and cared for, with special regard to age, gender, culture, and ability. This includes the wider congregation, leaders, helpers, and clergy, as well as denominational leaders. We all have a vital role to play in Safe Ministry. The foundational concepts of Safe Ministry provide both the 'why' and 'how to' for fulfilling our pastoral and Diocesan

responsibilities, as well as our legal obligations.

God's love for all people is the underpinning rationale or the 'why' for our commitment to people's safety. Healthy team ministry, God's gift of boundaries, and fulfilling our duty of care, combine as the 'how to' of Safe Ministry. These concepts need to be outworked through transparent and accountable policy, procedures, and practices.

2.a. God's love for all people

God is love! (1 John 4:16) This is the starting place for Safe Ministry for all people.

God's love is expressed in God's nature as the community God, i.e. the triune Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is into this love God invites us. He created us in His image, i.e. relational beings. We are created in love, for love.

God's love is expressed in His revelation to us throughout His word, and through His incarnation. It is because "God so loved the world", John 3:16 states, that God came into the world to save us. John 3:17 continues that Jesus came not to condemn the world, but rather, to save the world.

Jesus is the hands-on demonstration of God's love for all people, not only the religious, important or wise, but also for children, women, the lowly, the poor, the sick, sinners and tax collectors - the outcast.

In Jesus, everyone is loved! The Greek word for love in many New Testament passages is 'agape' - a love that is self-giving in its nature.

This type of love is explained in Philippians 2:5-8 "*In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!*"

In this passage we are called, in response to God's love for us, to put others first, consider others' interests, and to imitate the example of Christ who emptied Himself of the glory of heaven for the sake of the world.

Our primary motive for Safe Ministry is God's love for us.

This foundational concept of 'God's love for all people' is reflected in our **Diocesan Safe Ministry Policy**.

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.

Statement 1

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: We acknowledge that all people in our Church have a right to feel and be safe in their interactions and experiences in all our ministry, programs.

2.b. Healthy team ministry



Ministry is safest when it is conducted in healthy teams (accountable and transparent), rather than when conducted with the mindset of 'solo' or 'my' ministry.

In healthy teams we can nurture each other, enter into relationships with each other and receive ministry from each other. Healthy teams keep safe one another, and those whom we serve.

The New Testament, and in particular Paul's epistles, are filled with words about 'ministry' being the work of the Holy Spirit, who gifts the members of the body of Christ so that they can minister to one another. In 1 Corinthians 12 we are reminded that we are all a part of the body of Christ. Body ministry is about 'us' working together in healthy teams.

Teams represent God and the church

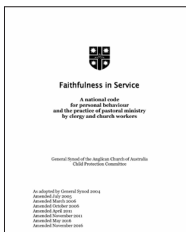
All those who serve in roles at church, be they Bishops, clergy, staff, Parish Council members, ministry coordinators, team leaders, team members or rostered helpers, are representatives of God and the church.

Serving God and the church is a privilege and responsibility. It is a position of delegated authority or perceived authority to influence others for God.

This concept of all church workers being 'representatives of God' is ultimately about the way that others perceive the role of the church worker, rather than about how the church worker perceives their own role.

Consider the 'other person' as a new person coming to the church for the first time, or as a vulnerable person, such as a small child or a person with an intellectual disability. If that person sees you 'doing' a task at church, how do they view you? It would be reasonable that they would think that you must be someone who 'works' here, an important person, a person with some degree of influence. In this way, no matter how large or small the role is, all church workers are representatives of God and His church. All church workers could be perceived by the most vulnerable as a trusted person, a representative of the church.

Jesus gave his disciples a pattern for representing God as servant church workers. Jesus said to his disciples that they were not to be like the workers of this world who lord it over others, but rather to serve, "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Matthew 20:25-28. This may be called servant leadership.



The Code of Conduct for clergy and licensed church workers, Faithfulness in Service, states: “When Peter wrote to the Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor, he reminded them of their identity in Christ as God’s chosen people, sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ. The call to be holy is reflected in both the Old and New Testaments as the appropriate response to God’s grace. Christians live according to the knowledge that they have been created by God and redeemed by Christ.

When Paul wrote to the Philippian Christians he rejoiced in their fellowship and prayed that their love might grow in knowledge and discernment so that they might see what was significant for their Christian vocation and be enabled to live pure and blameless lives for the day of Jesus Christ. In the light of that growing knowledge of God’s love they are to live in humility and faithfulness in the power of the Holy Spirit. They live out that love in their contact with others, especially those to whom they minister in Christ’s name.

The Church is the fellowship that nurtures and sustains Christians as they seek to follow Christ faithfully and participate in God’s mission. Its leaders especially are to be examples of Christian faith and obedience as they exercise their vocation, in dependence on the Holy Spirit.”

Screening of workers

The Diocesan Safe Ministry Policy states our commitment to safe workers.

Statement 3

We commit ourselves to the welfare of all people through our acts, regulations, codes of conduct, policies, guidelines, procedures and related safe ministry documentation, which includes:

- safe and effective recruitment, training, supervision, support and resourcing.

Supporting and supervising church workers

Although thorough recruitment is essential, it is equally important that church workers are supported through ministry supervision. For example: A potential church worker may have great motivation for ministry and all the right gifts for leading in a ministry at age 22. Their interview to ascertain their suitability for the role may be the best you have ever conducted and their application for ministry and referees may be glowing - a safe church worker! However, will that same church worker be appropriate for the same role in 5 years’ time?

What life pressures such as children, death of loved ones, marriage, work, and housing arrangements are impacting upon the church worker? How will these impact his/her ability to lead others?

The components of support and supervision are: clear role expectations, adequate support for church workers, a commitment to leadership development, a clear set of boundaries (code of conduct), and well-communicated processes for handling conflict and complaints of misconduct against church workers.

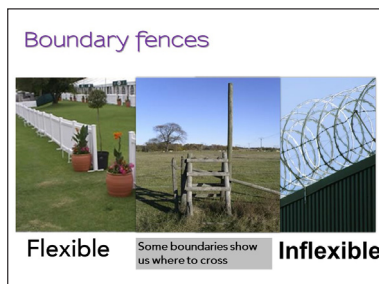
As a church worker you could be expected to:

- commit to the aims of the ministry
- support other ministry team church workers
- fulfil your ministry role as described to you by your ministry co-ordinator
- undergo any training required for your ministry position
- attend ministry team meetings as required
- embrace and uphold the church’s code of conduct

A word on annual ministry reviews

Once a church worker has commenced ministry, it is a helpful practice to spend time with them on a regular basis, reflecting on how they are fulfilling their ministry role on a regular basis. This can be achieved through formal and/or informal channels appropriate to the nature of their role. The key purpose is to provide a forum and expectation that a ministry coordinator or supervisor will assist those in ministry leadership to reflect on how they are fulfilling their role. It is not designed to be punitive or a way of removing people from roles, but more an opportunity for co-ordinators to affirm their ministry workers and ensure that healthy practices including life-ministry balance are in place, that church workers are experiencing a healthy spiritual life and to encourage them to reflect on their call to the role on an ongoing basis.

2.c. The gift of boundaries



In creation, God established boundaries. God created order from chaos, separating day from night, sea from land, each animal in its kind. In Genesis chapter 3 we read that in the garden, God gave humankind a boundary, i.e. to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When this boundary was violated by the first humans, this brought about broken relationships.

Relationship boundaries in the Bible provide humanity with the pattern for loving relationships; from the Ten Commandments and the covenant between Israel and God, through to relational frameworks such as Ephesians 5:15-21. We are to submit to one another out of reverence for God.

Ministry boundaries

As church workers we need to be respectful, and carefully navigate other people's boundaries. This is not just about being respectful of the boundaries of others, but about consciously engaging in respectful relationships and interactions.

The burden is on us as church workers to establish and maintain healthy boundaries, and to cross boundaries only when and where it is appropriate. That is, church workers must put other people's needs before their own and act in other people's best interests.

In ministry we will need to cross boundaries regularly, such as when we speak to a person, send a text message, shake someone's hand, or challenge another person's point of view. These can all be part of normal and acceptable boundary-crossing within a ministry context.

We also need to be mindful of the possible dual roles/relationships we have with others, where we have two or more roles in a person's life, eg. a pastor with a congregation member who also happens to be a family member. We need to ensure appropriate management of the associated implications.

Four important questions we can ask ourselves before crossing a boundary are:

- Is this the **right time** to cross this boundary?
- Is this the **right place** to cross this boundary?
- Is this the **right situation** for this boundary-crossing?
- Is this boundary-crossing **right for this person**?

Some ministry boundaries are *flexible*. How we interact within the boundaries may be different depending on the time, place, circumstance and the people we are serving.

Some ministry boundaries are *inflexible*. They are designed to show us clearly where we must not go. Codes of conduct provide professional boundaries that should never be crossed. Further, inflexible boundaries are also established by law.

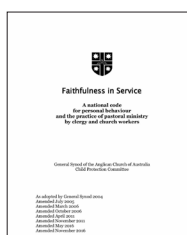
Professional boundaries

Professional boundaries are those which an organisation, in our case the Diocese, provides to workers to help maintain safe interactions both between workers, and also with those to whom workers minister. These are often referred to as a code of conduct. A code of conduct is helpful for ensuring that church workers are clear on boundaries, given that they have been given delegated authority and a position of power to spiritually influence others. Codes of conduct are not laws to be added to grace, rather, they are expressions of our respect and commitment to each other's safety.

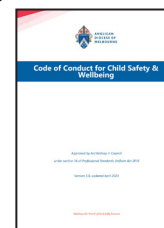
A code of conduct relates to expected and appropriate behaviour and accountability. It defines clear behavioural and activity boundaries rather than assuming that people know the boundaries. Any person who holds a ministry role is deemed to be a church worker and as such is subject to the code of conduct.

Promotion of, and adherence to, the code of conduct, by all church workers, assists the church in being accountable to those in its care.

In relation to ministry with children, the Victorian Child Safe Standards have legislated the requirement for a code of conduct. The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme (applicable for those working with children) also refers to codes of conduct and professional boundaries which are not to be breached.



The Anglican National Code of Conduct, Faithfulness in Service, Section 4.11-20, provides guidance for Safe Ministry boundary crossings. e.g. S.4.11 *"Make sure you are clear about the requirements of your role, including the hours to be worked and the nature of your responsibilities as well as your leave and other entitlements. You need to be sure that your legitimate personal needs can be met."*



In line with the Child Safe Standards in Victoria we also abide by our **Diocesan Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing**.

2.d. Duty of care

Duty of care is a term we are more used to hearing in relation to workplace safety, and is less thought of in the church context. However, duty of care finds its origins in Jesus' directive to *"Love your neighbour as yourself"* (Mark 12:31) and is therefore foundational for our provision of safe ministry events and programs.

The key scripture that underpins these policy documents and guides us in all interactions within the safe ministry framework is: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength"*; and the second is this: *"love your neighbour as yourself"* (Mark 12:30-31).

This scripture guides us into appropriate relationships and provides the basis for the establishment and exercising of safe programs and practices, run in safe environments by safe leaders in a safe and harm-free Christian community.

Duty of care is to do everything reasonably practicable to protect others from harm.

This relates to both acts commission and also to acts of inattention or omission (negligence) and applies equally to buildings, kitchens, parking lots and the way we treat people.

Our duty of care does not end when our program is over. Rather, it applies to all people who enter church property at all times of the day, whether we are running a program or not.

The Parish needs to be able to demonstrate that it has done all it could reasonably have done to protect others from harm.

Simply having policy and procedures is not enough. The question that needs to be answered is, "In that particular situation, did the church follow its policy and procedures?"

To ensure that we discharge our duty of care and in so doing meet community expectations, we need to ensure that all church-authorized programs are well-planned, having had all foreseeable risks identified, reduced or negated.

This means that we think through what is safe, then put plans in place to ensure that we act safely. This includes implementing policies and procedures in order to protect people in our care from potential abuse or injury, and leaders from potential allegations of abuse or injury.

This includes safe physical, online and emotional environments.

The Diocesan Safe Ministry Policy and our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy expresses the Diocese's commitments to safe physical & online environments.

Safe Ministry Policy Statement 4

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.

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

2.1 The Purpose of this policy is to (b) promote a culture of child empowerment, safety and wellbeing including by ensuring that physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed;

Physical environments

Providing safe physical environments is important if attendees are to participate freely in activities.

To ensure that both church workers and ministry program participants are kept as safe as reasonably practicable, completing a risk assessment for your ministry program is recommended.

Our Diocesan Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy states:

7.1 To reduce and prevent risks in the ADOM environment, ADOM: (a) conducts Child Safety Risk Assessments to consider risks of specific activities by ADOM, and the characteristics of children and young people expected to be present in that environment.

The Policy sets out the responsibilities for Child Safe environments on the Parish leadership (Clergy and Parish Council):

6.12 Parish leaders are responsible for:

- (a) taking all practical measures to ensure this Policy and the Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing are implemented effectively and that a child safe culture is maintained in all ADOM environments;*
- (b) appointing Parish Child Safety Officers and ensuring that ADOM is made aware of the appointment;*
- (c) considering child safety at all Parish Council meetings;*
- (d) ensuring that the ADOM child safety policies and procedures, including this policy, are clearly linked on the Parish website;*
- (e) ensuring Church Workers and Contractors engaged in child-connected work receive training and information on child safety consistent with this Policy;*

(f) consulting with Parish communities, including children and young people, about child safety;

(g) ensuring all adults in Parish community are aware of their obligation to report suspected child abuse and harm, or risk of child abuse and harm;

(h) assuring ADOM that key identified risks have been appropriately assessed, managed and reported (including risk treatments).

(Child Safety and Well-being Policy 2023)

Online safety

The use of electronic communication media (eg. telephone, email, social networking sites such as Facebook, and SMS) are a part of everyday life.

As leaders it is important that we consider how we can use this form of communication appropriately. We need to be mindful of the positional power dynamic that exists between those in church leadership and those under their care in pastoral relationships. This applies to all ministry relationships regardless of the age of the people involved.

We need to be mindful that electronic communication may be used to test or violate relational boundaries or even as a way to foster relationships for the purpose of preying on those who are vulnerable.

The following principles may be of value to consider when exercising safe ministry practices through the use of electronic communication in a ministry setting.

- Practise transparency and accountability in interactions
- Practise courtesy and engage in respectful interactions
- Practise care in social networking

In relation to ministry with Children and Young People the Diocesan Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing provides a clear set of boundaries (dos and don't) for online interactions with children (0-17yrs).

The eSafety Commissioner's website <https://www.esafety.gov.au> is an excellent resource hub for information on safe online interactions. If your parish is considering doing online church or has online services and resources, consider the *Safety by Design (SbD)*, "an eSafety initiative that encourages organisations to put user safety and rights at the centre of the design, development and release of online products and services" (<https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/safety-by-design>).

Emotional environments

Ensuring safe emotional and spiritual environments is fundamentally about putting other people's needs above our own agenda to ensure that a program runs successfully, respecting personhood, (i.e. valuing individuals, their backgrounds, their personality, their hopes, dreams and fears).

It is about staying true to the good news message that Jesus came to bring life, not, as he warned about, to put heavy burdens on people. It is fostering a welcoming and caring ministry space, where people feel safe to share their ideas without being ridiculed.

Consider the areas below for ensuring safe emotional environments:

- **Handling private information (National Privacy Act)**
Obtaining information about people is essential if we are to be equipped to care for them, not only physically but also emotionally. We need to respect people's information especially in critical situations or emergencies, and around guardianship issues.

When it is apparent that the person is going to be attending fairly regularly, it may be necessary to formally obtain information, dependant upon the age and vulnerabilities of program participants, including the person's name, contact phone number, and for children, medical information and any guardianship details.

Please consider the principles in the National Privacy Act i.e.:

- private information is only collected if necessary
- individuals concerned are advised of its intended use
- personal information collected is stored securely and not divulged to others without the consent of the individual involved
- any personal information the church is holding which is no longer required, is out of date or incorrect, is either destroyed or amended to be accurate

- **Responding to the needs of an individual**

When sharing in ministry our starting point should be, "How can I serve you?" It is important not to predetermine how much physical contact, or how many words, Bible verses, or 'your solutions' with which you need to provide a person. Minister to the person. This is not based on the need of the leader to provide comfort. Ask a person *what they need from you* (e.g. "Would you like me to pray for you?") Touch, counsel, and emotional support is provided for the other person's well-being, not for your own ego or to meet your emotional needs.

- **Respect diversity**

People may come to church programs with a variety of cultural norms and expectations. We need to be aware of the expectations and taboos that may exist in the cultural settings in which we minister.

Value and protect the cultural safety of the different cultural traditions and heritages of Australian indigenous and other cultural groups in our churches. For those ministering in such settings, it is essential to take special care in ensuring that the principles found in this policy document are followed.

In relation to ministry to children Victorian Child Safe Standards require us to ensure the :

Child Safe Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued

Child Safe Standard 5 – Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice (CCYP: Child Safe Standards)

The Diocesan Safe Ministry Policy, Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing and our Action Plan for-Meeting-the-New-Victorian-Child-Safe-Standards set our commitment to these standards, required actions and expected behaviours.

- **The power of the role model**

The behaviour of church workers is observed at all times by the people who follow. Followers are quick to discern inconsistency between words and actions, and credibility can be lost if people perceive inconsistencies. As leaders if we are discouraging, unreasonably punitive, disrespectful or sarcastic, this is what we are modelling. It can become a case of a leader "reaping what they have sowed". This includes being respectful with your words and in non-verbal communication.

Since words as well as actions can be misinterpreted, it is wise for leaders to think about the impact of their words. Leaders have a responsibility to ensure that their conversations are not abusive or offensive within the normal range of these terms. People will from time to time take offence at what we say, but our responsibility is to not be offensive or derogatory in our conversation with others.

A general principle to be embraced by all leaders is to consider the impact of their words and actions before they speak or act. If it is necessary to speak to a program participant privately, it is wise to inform your team leader or another member of your team of your intention to do so. This removes the risk of supposition, by others looking on, that anything inappropriate could be happening.

3. Responding to concerns

Church workers should, and need, to feel safe to raise concern about behaviours and also about incidents and accidents at church.

The Parish needs to be able to appropriately respond to any concerns that they have for any person at church. These concerns may be for a person/s at risk of harm, or concerns about a person's harmful behaviours towards others, a OH&S or injury concern and also any hazard.



The simple message is - report all your concerns!

The Diocese does not expect any person to respond alone. Getting the right advice and help when you have concerns or feel uncomfortable about a situation is essential for responding appropriately to the situation you have or are experiencing.

Report your concerns so that the Parish and Diocese can respond pastorally and legally, and activate the relevant Diocesan procedures or protocols.

Dependent upon the type of concern you have, you will need to tell the appropriate person either at your Parish and/or Kooyoora.

In responding to hazards, incidents or health & safety issues, please tell a church warden or your ministry leader.

3.a. Concerns about harmful behaviours

This section aims to help church workers understand the issues surrounding 'harm', and to recognise and respond to all concerns in relation to all people who may be at risk of being harmed.

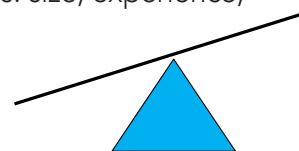
Power in relationships

In all relationships there is a balance of power between the parties. Relationships are either equal in power, i.e. relationships in which two or more parties have the same amount of power, or alternatively, they are unequal, i.e. there is a power imbalance, as is the case between adults and children.

In some relationships it is appropriate that the more powerful person takes steps to address the balance of power. In other relationships the more powerful person needs to consider how their actions will impact upon the less powerful person, whilst retaining the power imbalance.

The balance of power can be impacted by a number of factors such as: size, experience, knowledge and position (role).

In relationships where a person's position gives them power over another in order that the less powerful person might be protected or educated (e.g. teachers and pupils), it is inappropriate to change the balance of power. Within hierarchical organisational structures, or



where someone is charged with upholding the law, for example, or where a person's health is being attended to, there exists an appropriate power imbalance.

In a church context, those in positions of leadership also hold varying levels of power to influence others for God. In the eyes of those under their authority, leaders may be seen as representing God's authority and, in some cases, God's will for their lives. Therefore, those in positions of power must have a sound understanding of, and must uphold, appropriate relationship boundaries so as to protect the less powerful person.

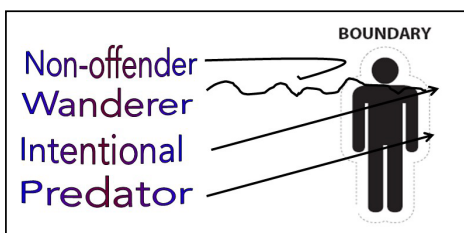
Boundary violations

We have already explored the gift of boundaries, and stated that some boundaries are flexible, and can be crossed appropriately, determined by place, relationships, roles, and circumstance, and that others should never be crossed (inflexible boundaries).

When boundaries are not crossed appropriately, i.e. when they are violated, this may negatively impact (cause harm to) the person on the receiving end of the inappropriate crossing. Boundary violations can occur across a variety of situations, be they spiritual, financial, physical, emotional, verbal, and/or sexual.

Using the language of boundary violations can be helpful when addressing concerns with those who may be moving towards, or committing, boundary violations.

It is important to acknowledge that not all boundary violations are carried out with malicious intent. The following descriptions are not an attempt to define types of boundary violators, but rather to provide a description of the continuum from accidental violations by those who respect boundaries, through to intentional violations.



- **Non-offender** (i.e. boundary respecter): Discovers that they have unintentionally overstepped a boundary, and makes a deliberate correction.
- **Wanderer**: Approaches a boundary and engages in a violation without intent, but because it is not considering how the other person is experiencing the interaction, it has the potential to do great harm.

boundary should not be crossed, but does so intentionally in order to do harm to the other person.

- **Predator**: The predator heads directly for the boundary, and aims to break down a person's boundaries.

Abuse

Abuse is the disrespecting of personhood which 'steals' or 'robs' from another their self-respect, self-esteem and self-confidence, and can lead to short and long-term effects. It often results in a sense of 'powerlessness' or 'voicelessness', eroding a person's self-worth, and hinders the person's ability to act in healthy, life-giving ways, both towards their own self and others.

Abuse can take many forms, such as actions of commission, such as physical, emotional, sexual abuse, or acts of omission, like neglect.

Using the language of boundary violations, abuse is a serious boundary violation/s leading to significant harm to a person.

A biblical example of abuse as the misuse of power resulting in the robbing of personhood is the recount of David, Bathsheba and Uriah found in 2 Samuel 11 & 12.

In this story David sexually abused Bathsheba, and then, to cover this up, had Uriah murdered. David then took Bathsheba as one of his wives and she gave birth to a son. Chapter 11 verse 27 says, *“But the Lord was displeased with what David had done.”* In Chapter 12 the Lord sent the prophet Nathan to confront David. Nathan confronted David using the analogy of a shepherd and sheep. However, interestingly, Nathan’s charge against David had nothing to do with the covenant violations of coveting, adultery, rape or murder, but rather stealing.

3.b Responding to concerns

Concerns include anyone’s experience of:

- child abuse and maltreatment
- bullying behaviour (online or in person)
- sexual harassment
- sexual abuse (assault)
- physical violence
- emotionally harmful behaviours
- elder abuse
- homelessness
- any disability
- harassment
- sexual misconduct
- financial abuse
- stalking
- domestic violence
- self-harm / suicide risk
- mental illness
- grooming behaviours (e.g. financial, sexual, emotional)

Note: The Safe Ministry with Children and Young People course (Level 2 training) provides more information in relation to identifying and responding to child protection concerns.

Concerns about children

Child Safe Standard 8 requires that all staff & volunteers are provided with training & support to recognise the indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people. The following information provides an overview of the type of child abuse and the behavioural & physical indicators that you should be concerned about.

Please report all concerns in accordance with our **Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Procedure 2023** as found on our Diocesan Website - Making Your Parish Safe tab.

Who to inform?

All reasonable concerns and allegations of child abuse must be reported to Police or child protection.

All concerns and allegations of abuse and misconduct against clergy or Church workers are to also be reported to Kooyoora Professional Standards Unit.

The first step in making a complaint against a clergy person or church worker or seeking advice is to call Kooyoora on: 1800 135 246 (this is a 24/7 message taking service however you will not receive a call back until the next business day if outside of hours). All information provided to this service is strictly confidential.

Reporting Child Abuse in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

1 If a child is in **immediate danger** at any point **CALL 000**

2 All suspicions or reports of child abuse must be reported to:	What is Child Abuse?	Who can report neglect and abuse of a child under the age of 18?	What sorts of things must be reported?
Police Child Protection Kooyoora Professional Standards	Abuse and neglect includes but is not limited to: Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Family Violence, Sexual Abuse, Grooming and Neglect.	Children, Parents, Staff, Volunteers, Anyone.	All child safety concerns must be reported: • Disclosure of past and present abuse and harm • Allegations, suspicions or observations • Breaches of the Code of Conduct

CONTACT NUMBERS:

POLICE 000

CHILD PROTECTION SEE BELOW

KOOYOORA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS 1800 135 246

The person taking a message on this number will ask you to give a name and your phone number or address so that Kooyoora can contact you as soon as possible.

Kooyoora Ltd has been appointed by the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne to respond to all reasonable concerns and allegations of misconduct including sexual, physical, spiritual, emotional or psychological abuse by clergy or Church workers. Kooyoora Ltd is an independent Professional Standards company which undertakes Professional Standards work for not for profit charitable entities.

All concerns and allegations of abuse and misconduct against the archbishop are to also be reported to the Director of Episcopal Standards.

The first step in making a complaint against the archbishop is to call the Director of Episcopal Standards through the recorded information line at any time on 1800 997 747.

Reporting concerns of child abuse will not replace or negate obligations to report to Police or child protection. The Director can support you through the reporting process.

Types of child abuse and harm

The following information from the Commission for Children and Young People provides you with the types of child abuse and harm you need to report according to the procedure:

Physical violence can occur when a person intentionally or recklessly uses physical force against, with or in the presence of a child without their consent, which causes, or could cause, the child harm. Physical violence can also occur when someone intentionally or recklessly causes a child to believe that physical force is about to be used against them without their consent.

Emotional and psychological harm can arise as a result of experiencing a sexual offence, sexual misconduct, physical violence or neglect. Emotional and psychological harm may also arise in circumstances that involve persistent verbal abuse, coercive or manipulative behaviour, hostility towards a child, humiliation, belittling or scapegoating, conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or rejected, or causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger. Serious emotional or psychological harm often decreases a child's sense of identity, dignity and self-worth, and the impact can be chronic and debilitating.

Neglect is a failure to meet the basic needs of a child (such as their wellbeing and safety). Neglect can arise as a result of a single event or a combination of different events including:

- supervisory neglect (failure to appropriately exercise adequate supervision or control of a child)
- physical neglect (failure to meet a child's physical needs including the provision of adequate and appropriate food, clothing, shelter or physical hygiene)
- educational neglect (failure to ensure that a child's formal educational needs are being met)
- emotional neglect (failure to provide adequate nurturing, encouragement and support to a child).

For neglect to be serious, it must involve a failure to meet the basic needs of a child that is more than significant, being either substantial and protracted, or that endangers life. 'Serious' refers to the quality of the failure to meet the basic needs of a child, not to the outcome of the neglect. It is not necessary that a child suffered any harm as a result of the neglect.

Child sexual abuse is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. It includes a broad range of behaviours involving a sexual element that are committed against, with or in the presence of a child. While a child sexual offence will generally include any sexual encounter by an adult that involves a child, in some circumstances conduct by children aged ten years or over can also constitute a sexual offence.

Child sexual grooming can involve the use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques used to build trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour. Grooming is often described as the 'preparation' phase of child sexual abuse, undertaken by the perpetrator to gain the trust of a child, and to establish secrecy and silence. Perpetrators may groom to gain access to a child, initiate and maintain sexual abuse of that child, and to conceal the sexual abuse from others who may identify it. Some types of grooming are captured by the criminal offence of grooming. This offence targets predatory conduct by an adult designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child under 16 years of age. Other grooming behaviours, while not a criminal offence, may still come within the definition of child abuse.

Signs that may indicate a child is being abused

The following is a short overview of some common behavioural indicators of child abuse and harm to look out for.

Abuse can be hard to spot. Some children show no external signs of abuse.

Sometimes a child may tell us if they are being harmed, and at other times we will need to look out for changes in behaviour, emotions or physical appearance. Common signs across different abuse types include:

- unusual or regressive changes in behaviour, like a sudden decline in academic performance, anxiety, withdrawal, hyperactivity, bedwetting, sleep disturbances, drug or alcohol misuse
- concerning behaviours that may be harmful to themselves or others
- being extremely sensitive and alert to their surroundings (hyper-vigilance)
- absences from school without reasonable explanation
- frequent headaches or stomach pains
- drawings or writing which depict violence or abuse
- raising a concern about a friend or someone they know
- attempted suicide or self-harm
- unexplained or inconsistent, vague, or unlikely explanations for an injury
- unexplained bruising, fractures or other physical injuries
- unusual fear of physical contact
- harm to others or animals
- wariness or fear of someone including a parent, carer, other adult or child
- trying to protect friends or other family members from someone
- reluctance to go home
- the child is assessed as having experienced a significant delay in their emotional or intellectual development or that their functioning has been impaired
- taking on a caring or parental role with siblings prematurely.

A child may be suffering from one or more types of abuse.

Watch for any changes in the child's general mood. The child may become anxious, irritable, depressed, angry, or show a combination of emotions. However, do not assume that just because you see these signs the child is being abused. Keep in mind that these signs can apply to a child under stress and may not be related to child abuse.

Source: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-CSS/A-guide-for-creating-a-Child-Safe-Organisation-190422.pdf> (Accessed April 2023)

Considerations for responding to concerns about adults

When responding to your concerns about adults consider:

- 1. Adults are self-determining:** Adults have the right to make decisions about their own lives, so long as the actions are not endangering themselves or others. This means we will need to work with the adult at risk rather than the principle of 'acting in the best interest of the child' used when considering a response in the area of child protection.
- 2. Legal issues:** Victorian legislation must be adhered to in responding to concerns, including sexual allegations of assault, harassment and other criminal conduct.
- 3. Diocesan procedures:** For concerns about those who are in a parish there are a number of Diocesan procedures that may need to be activated.

The Diocesan Safe Ministry Policy states:

We commit ourselves to the welfare of all people through our acts, regulations, codes of conduct, policies,

guidelines, procedures and related safe ministry documentation, which includes:

- Appropriate and timely responses to all complaints of alleged misconduct and all other grievances
- Pastoral care in responding to those who have been abused
- Safe and appropriate ministry to persons of concern.

4. Pastoral responses: No matter the type of concern, the church has a pastoral responsibility to care for all persons involved in the situation. Pastoral care needs to be carefully planned and take into account the 'best interests' of the person or persons who are at risk in the situation. For concerns about the conduct of people with special needs (e.g. intellectual disability, physical disability or mental health concerns) speak to your Vicar who may seek advice from relevant health services.

To ensure that pastoral responses occur in a timely manner, it is important that in responding to your concerns about adults do not act alone. Please report your concerns about adults to your Vicar or a Church Warden.

If your concern related to church worker misconduct please also contact the Office of Professional Standards (Kooyoora) in business hours (1800 135 246).

The following pages contain specific information in relation to the some specific of concerns in relation to adults areas:

Bullying behaviours

A person in a church may state that they have been bullied. They may have experienced some uncomfortable situations in church life, however, not all unpleasant experiences within a church fall into the realm of bullying behaviours. It is important to determine whether what a person is experiencing is actually bullying, or not. Factors such as conflict in a situation, personality styles, or differing expectations might be at play. In these situations it may or may not be that the person has experienced bullying behaviours.

Bullying behaviours can include: minimisation of concerns expressed by the target of the behaviours, lying, denial of bullying behaviours alleged, covert or overt intimidation of a target through words or actions, guilt-tripping, playing the victim role, playing the servant role, shouting and/or swearing at target, threats to target's position or family comfort if compliance is not achieved, speaking over target when they endeavour to express a viewpoint, ignoring the target – including face-to-face encounters and electronic interactions, consistent fault-finding, withholding favour, and refusal to acknowledge presence of the target of the bullying behaviours.

What is NOT considered to be bullying: There are things that happen in churches that are not considered to be bullying, even when these experiences may be uncomfortable for those on the receiving end of the behaviours.

The following are *not* considered to be bullying:

- Reasonable supervisor/team leader/pastoral action, including:
 - counselling you because of concerns about your behaviour
 - allocating reasonable tasks to you in keeping with your team or ministry area
 - requesting you to do things that are requested of everyone in a team or attending an event
 - changing your roster in a reasonable way, even if you don't like it
 - giving you critical feedback about your actions when this is done in privacy and in a respectful manner
 - asking you to move into a different ministry when this is in keeping with your skills and you are consulted first
 - being left out of meetings when they are not relevant to your role or ministry
- Good natured interactions with peers, such as:
 - joking, laughing and telling stories when it is not directed at anyone and does not contain offensive content
 - being respectfully told by another church member that you are bothering them or hampering their service
 - occasionally being left out of social gatherings, such as a group of church members going out for dinner together
 - someone disagreeing with your opinion in a respectful way
 - accidentally being overlooked in a social invitation (so long as this is not a consistent and repeated occurrence)

Responding to bullying behaviours: The key principle to apply when addressing bullying is initially to address the behaviour in the least intrusive and least formal way. If the informal processes do not result in a satisfactory outcome, then more formal options can be considered.

Family, and domestic violence (also referred to as interpersonal violence)

Defined as when one person uses power and control over another person in the family or a current or former intimate relationship. The Victorian Family Violence Protection Act 2008 defines family violence as: a) behaviour by a person towards a family member of that person if that behaviour—

i. is physically or sexually abusive; or

ii. is emotionally or psychologically abusive; or

iii. is economically abusive; or

iv. is threatening; or

v. is coercive; or

vi. in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or another person; or

b) behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, behaviour referred to in paragraph (a).

Family violence is a serious and widespread issue in Australia with long-term impacts for victim/survivors. It affects people of all ages and backgrounds, including in churches. Although both men and women can perpetrate or experience family violence, it is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men against women and children.

Supporting a person who experiences family violence

Key principles to follow when supporting someone are:

- Prioritise their safety.
- Support their choices.
- Seek advice from family violence professionals.

- Be sensitive to the unique challenges and barriers for people facing additional structural oppression, discrimination and marginalisation based on their Aboriginality, ethnicity, cultural and/or linguistic background, faith, migration and visa status, sexual orientation, age, or disability that may exacerbate risk or prevent safety.

Responding to a disclosure

It takes great courage to disclose. When someone is ready to talk:

- Actively listen, without interruption, giving the victim/survivor time to share their experience.
- Show that you believe them.
- Take their fears or concerns seriously.
- Emphasise that they are not to blame for their experience.
- Provide them with the 1800 RESPECT helpline (1800 737 732) or a local specialist organisation. Refer to the Family Violence guidelines for key contact information.
- Maintain confidentiality and be honest about its limits in certain circumstances.
- Refer to the Family Violence Procedures for further guidance.
- Keep in contact with them afterwards.

What not to do:

- Talk about your own experiences of violence.
- Try and find out details.
- Blame them or judge or criticise their choices.
- Make excuses for or minimise the controlling behaviour.
- Try to 'fix' the problem for them or tell them what to do.
- Provide counselling or advise marriage counselling.
- Expect them to end the relationship with the perpetrator or to remain in the relationship with the perpetrator, even if they are married.
- Talk to the perpetrator about their behaviour.
- Talk negatively about the perpetrator.

Reporting requirements

- If someone is seriously injured, in need of urgent medical help, at immediate risk of harm, their life is in danger, or you have just witnessed a serious crime, call 000.
- If children are involved, follow the Diocesan Child Safety reporting procedures and contact the police (000), Child Protection, and Kooyoora.
- If the person using violence is a church worker, contact Kooyoora.
- It is important to let the victim/survivor know about the reporting and leave them to make decisions about pursuing any additional reporting.

Family violence policy, procedures and guidelines for church workers

The Diocese of Melbourne has developed Family Violence policy, procedures and guidelines for church workers in line with the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM). The purpose is to affirm that family violence in all its forms is a violation of human dignity and wrong and to provide a framework for church workers on how to support and respond to people experiencing family violence and meet reporting requirements. Church workers are to refer to this forthcoming policy package for further guidance on their role and responsibilities in relation to family violence.

How can we prevent family violence?

To prevent male violence against women, we need to address the culture driving it. To do this, we know from international evidence that the social enablers we need to change are attitudes and

behaviours that justify violence against women, show disrespect towards women, support male-dominated control of decision-making and resources across society, and/or reinforce gender stereotypes. Churches shape people's attitudes and behaviours and can play a critical role as agents of change in creating the deep cultural shift needed. To start, we must first examine our own attitudes and behaviours, and then call others to do likewise.

The Diocese of Melbourne's Preventing Violence Against Women Program

The Diocese has a Preventing Violence Against Women Program that aims to equip church leaders and parishes to prevent violence against women. It provides training and resources on responding to and preventing violence against women.

For more information and to get involved see: <https://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/pvaw/>

If you have concerns about, or receive a disclosure of, domestic or family violence please report this to your Vicar or Kooyoora.

Elder abuse

Elder abuse *"occurs when there is any act occurring within a relationship where there is an implication of trust, which results in harm to an older person. Abuse can include physical, sexual, financial, psychological and social abuse and/or neglect"*(endorsed at the Healthy Ageing Taskforce, 2000).

Suspicious that abuse has occurred may be aroused by physical signs and symptoms, or by the behaviour of the older person. It is important for leaders to be aware of any sudden or unusual changes in the behaviour patterns of their participants or congregation members. If someone shows one or more of the possible signs of abuse, it does not automatically mean she or he is being abused. Consider the context. Concerns that require reporting may arise from a single event or a pattern or series of events.

3.c. Diocesan response procedures

The Diocesan Safe Ministry Policy states:

We commit ourselves to the welfare of all people through our acts, regulations, codes of conduct, policies, guidelines, procedures and related safe ministry documentation, which includes:

- Appropriate and timely responses to all complaints of alleged misconduct and all other grievances
- Pastoral care in responding to those who have been abused
- Safe and appropriate ministry to persons of concern.

This policy commitment is outworked through the following Diocesan procedures:

- The Diocesan Professional Standards Act (which defines misconduct)
- Diocesan Tribunal Protocol
- The Diocesan Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Procedure 2023

In the implementation of our responses to allegations of misconduct we are committed to our pastoral, ethical, legal, diocesan, risk management and insurance obligations and responsibilities.

Professional Standards Uniform Act - allegations of misconduct

The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne takes all complaints of misconduct very seriously.

When you have a concern that a church worker has engaged in misconduct, please contact Kooyoora -1800 135 246.

The definition of misconduct in the Diocesan Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016 (s.5) includes:

bullying; emotional abuse; harassment; physical abuse; neglect of a child; sexual abuse; spiritual abuse; breaches of the Constitution or of a canon of the General Synod or of an ordinance of provincial synod or of the Diocesan Synod; offences under the Offences Canon 1962; any offence under a law of the State or Territory or the Commonwealth for which the maximum penalty prescribed is imprisonment for at least 6 months.

For the full list of what is included in the definition of 'misconduct by a church worker' please refer to the Diocesan Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016 on the Diocesan website: <https://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/governance-synod/synod-legislation/>

Care and Redress for survivors of abuse perpetrated by church workers

The Diocese is also committed to responding in a survivor-focused manner to all those who have experienced harm perpetrated by church workers. This includes our ongoing commitment to providing redress through the National Redress Scheme, and or other models.

For more information go to: <https://www.kooyoora.org.au/client-institutions/anglican-diocese-of-melbourne/redress/>

Safe Ministry to Persons of Concern

The restorative nature of the Gospel means that no one is outside the reaches of God's love. God's restoration and grace extend to all people, including those who may have committed past sexual offences, even against children. However, such offences do have life-long consequences.

In October 2019, the Diocesan Synod enacted a process to regulate the participation by a person of concern in the life of the Diocese. A person of concern is a person whose presence may constitute an unacceptable risk of harm to any person engaged in the activities of the parish, as a result of sexual abuse or physical abuse. This includes a person falling within any of the classes of persons defined in the Professional Standards Uniform Act, including convicted sex offenders. It is essential the the presence of a person of concern is reported to the Professional Standards office (Kooyoora).

For more information go to: <https://www.kooyoora.org.au/client-institutions/anglican-diocese-of-melbourne/clearances/persons-of-concern/>

Misunderstandings and conflict

Misunderstandings and conflicts can, and do, occur in the ministry context, just as they may occur in any group working for a common purpose.

The Diocese is committed to assisting parishes in dealing with disagreement and conflict in positive and constructive ways.

As part of a healthy approach to parish management, it is helpful to anticipate that conflict will occur to some degree. It can be unhelpful to expect that conflict should not occur in a Christian context. Conflict can become problematic where it is not appropriately addressed.

There are a number of factors which can contribute significantly to the ongoing nature of misunderstanding and conflict. Whilst not an extensive list, ongoing conflict in ministry can be impacted by organisational culture and structures, clash of personalities, the quest for personal power, hidden agendas, defensive language and always having to be right.

Misunderstandings and conflict can often be resolved through a personal approach, through open and honest communication and through the proper restoration of relationships. However, when this is not possible, or does not occur, it may be necessary to implement a more formal conflict resolution process. When necessary, parishes should seek advice from their Archdeacon and or Area Bishop.

The Diocese also has trained Support Teams for Parishes Experiencing Conflict, which are activated by the Area Bishop. These small support teams are now available to come alongside parishes, staff teams or congregations in times of conflict. There are some important principles which guide a team's facilitation and consultation work. The team's role is to empower a parish to deal well with its own conflict.

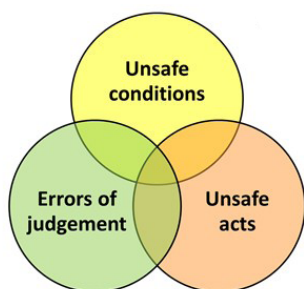
3.d. Responding to accidents and incidents

Whilst we all hope that they will never occur, accidents do happen, and there are emergencies.

At these times the health and safety of the person/s is of paramount concern and it may be necessary for a church worker to administer first aid to a person or persons.

Incidents

An incident is an undesired event which resulted, or could have resulted, in harm, damage or loss.



Whilst some incidents are unavoidable, other incidents may have resulted from unsafe conditions, unsafe acts and/or errors of judgment. When two or more of these factors are present, the likelihood of an incident resulting is higher.

A critical incident is an event or set of circumstances that have the potential to result in physical or psychological outcomes ranging from mild trauma to a fatality for one or more people.

An incident response plan is a systematic approach to planning and implementing an immediate and long-term response to an incident. It has three main stages: preparedness, response and recovery.

When responding to incidents:

- Every incident will require immediate response, in the moment. Follow up over the next 12-24 hours (or longer) including pastoral care for those involved.
- Review the reason for the incident and consider changes to be made to minimise the risk of the same incident occurring the next time the same activity or event is run.
- Report injuries or accidents which require secondary medical attention e.g. visit to a doctor or medical centre. These should be written up using the Diocesan incident report form (available from the Diocesan website).
- Report all incidents of a serious nature to the church's insurer via the Diocesan Insurance Department.
- Report all incidents to parents and/or caregivers of children and vulnerable adults (where appropriate), and then, in some instances where the impact may be felt by a wider group, report to that group (with the permission of those involved in the incident).

The important message is to respond to incidents in a considered manner and work together as a team.

4. Self-care



It is essential that you as a church worker engage in self-care. This relates to ensuring that your health and wellbeing is in the best place it can be in exercising your various ministry gifts. Maintaining good self-care boundaries in ministry is an expression of loving yourself as Jesus loves you.

Self-care can include; rewarding and/or distracting activities such as hobbies or family time; connecting with others; being honest with yourself (e.g. remembering that it is ok to be upset or worried or frustrated); treating yourself in some life-giving way; seeking out calming activities; taking a break. Attend to all your senses when thinking about self-care. Self-care in ministry relates to ensuring that your health and wellbeing is in the best place it can be to exercise your various ministry gifts.

Be proactive by considering:

i. **Life-giving activities:** Life-giving activities are those that lift you up, that lighten your mood and refresh as opposed to those which are life-draining. They will often link into your areas of passion within your ministry role. However, it is also important to consider activities that are not linked to your ministry role such as: time with God (e.g. Bible reading and prayer), hobbies; family time; connecting with others; being kind with yourself (e.g. remembering that it is ok to be upset or worried or frustrated); treating yourself in some way; seeking out calming activities; and/or taking a break. Engaging in life-giving activities that are not related to your ministry role is important for keeping a clear perspective, particularly in times when ministry is hard, or when conflicts occur in ministry. Remember that Jesus, in his earthly ministry, often retreated often to be with His Father. When considering life-giving activities ensure you are attending to all of your senses as well as all perspectives of your life, i.e. emotional, physical, cognitive (mental) and spiritual wellbeing.

ii. **Monitoring well-being:** Wellbeing needs to be considered from multiple perspectives. It may be helpful to consider various perspectives using a metaphor of water tanks.

Ask yourself, how full are each of my tanks?



To Ponder...

1. Consider the level of each of your tanks?

The sample shows that this person feels like they are operating at about 40% full physically and around 30% emotionally and cognitively and about 20% spiritually. They are not in good shape to be fulfilling their ministry role.

2. Ask yourself:

a. What is contributing to your level in each tank?

b. What life draining activities / circumstances are contributing to any low levels?

c. What life giving activities might enhance the levels of each tank?

d. Are you in "good enough shape" to be fulfilling your ministry role at the moment? If the answer is "no", then what actions might you need to take?



iii. Taking action when at risk: Once a person has ascertained that they are not in good shape for ministry by either using the “water tanks” metaphor or some other method, it is important that they speak to their supervisor. It may mean that they need to have a holiday, or a break from their role/s for a time; or have their role tasks adjusted to have more support in the practicalities of fulfilling their role. Whatever is considered in discussion with a supervisor, it is important to note that if a person has determined that their wellbeing is at risk if they continue as is, then something needs to change.

iv. Self-care after trauma: Each person has a unique response to being involved in situations where they feel traumatised. Even though general principles of self-care apply in most situations, individuals will most likely have some self-care needs that are unique to them. As part of your self-care it is important to debrief by verbally and emotionally ‘unloading’ when you have been involved in a traumatic ministry situation, e.g. of receiving a disclosure or witnessing abuse. The often-tried method of pushing away all emotional and cognitive responses to trauma invariably catches up with people, and when it does, it sometimes tragically marks the end of people’s ministries and long term relationships. You may need to seek professional help to cope if you are finding your usual strategies aren’t enough to manage. Investing in good counselling early can help you to maintain a long, effective ministry.

Reference Guide

The following reports and websites were used in the writing of this manual and are a good list of resources:

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