



Introduction

This course aims to develop awareness of, and assist with, Parish implementation of the Diocesan Safe Ministry Policies and the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Child Safe Standards for clergy, Parish Council members, Child Safe Officers and Ministry Program Coordinators.

Course Overview

1. Safe Ministry – the journey
2. Diocesan Safe Ministry Documentation
3. Human Resourcing for Safe Ministry
4. Victorian Child Safe Standards – Diocesan ACTION Plan
5. Overcoming implementation ‘hurdles’
6. Implementation scenarios
7. Q & A

Diocesan Safe Ministry weblink



<https://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/making-your-parish-child-safe/>

Diocesan contacts

- Kooyoora - Office of Professional Standards
W: kooyoora.org.au
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

Self-care during and after this course:



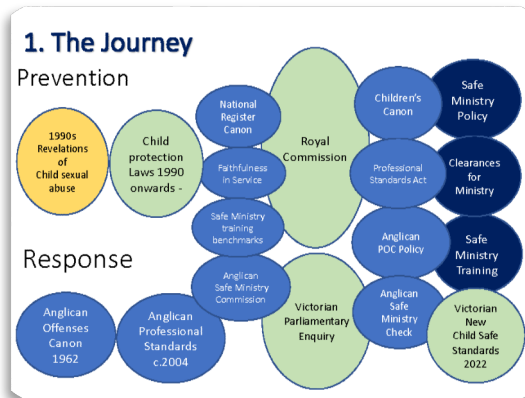
We acknowledge that discussing Safe Ministry and Professional Standards matters can be confronting and may trigger memories of harm or abuse for participants.

If participating in this course impacts you negatively in any way or if it raises concerns or issues from your past or present, please take the time to debrief with someone you trust and, if necessary, seek help from a counsellor.

Course provider’s website

creating
safercommunities <https://safercommunities.net.au/>

1. Safe Ministry – the journey



2. Diocesan Safe Ministry Documentation

Handout Appendices

A: [Safe Ministry Policy](#) (updated April 2023)

B: [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)

C: [Child Safety Policy for Children \(Child friendly language version on the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy\)](#)

D: [Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Procedure](#)

E: [Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing](#) (updated April 2023)

F: [Parish Self-Assessment Template to be used with Action Plan for Meeting New Victorian Child Safe Standards 2023](#)

Please use the Diocesan website to access Safe Ministry documentation
<https://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/making-your-parish-child-safe/>

Diocesan Safe Ministry Policy – extracts

1. Purpose

This policy expresses the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne’s commitment to safe ministry to fulfil the Church’s biblical, pastoral, legal and moral responsibilities, with the goal that all our ministries are spiritually, emotionally and physically safe.

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.

The Diocese is committed to promoting and protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of all people. The Diocese has zero tolerance for abuse and harm, and builds and maintains safe ministries by:

- Maintaining a clear and robust child safety framework.

- Fostering healthy relationships between church members, and those of the wider community, based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- Providing a safe and secure environment where all people are, and feel, respected.
- Having clear and well-communicated processes that empower all people, including children and other vulnerable people.
- Providing responsible and loving Christian leadership and ministry built on Scripture.
- Minimising the risk of misconduct, including harassment (such as racism and discrimination) and other forms of abuse, and the misuse of power by those in authority in churches.
- Ensuring that all complaints of misconduct and all other grievances are handled in a consistent, unbiased, fair and thorough manner.
- Fulfilling our biblical, pastoral, legal and moral obligations.

2. Scope

This policy outlines our commitments, responsibilities and procedures for safe ministry.

It applies to everyone in roles, offices and positions in our Diocese, including in St Paul's Cathedral, parishes and Authorised Anglican Congregations ('AACs').

This policy should be read in accordance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the Child Safety Policy for Children, the Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing, and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Procedure, which address our commitment to child safety and wellbeing, and the responsibilities and procedures for safe ministry in relation to children and young people. To the extent of any inconsistency, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the Child Safety Policy for Children, and Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing will prevail.

3. Policy Statements

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:

1. We acknowledge that all people in our Church have the right to feel and be safe in their interactions and experiences in all our ministry, programs and activities.
2. We acknowledge the need for sensitivity to, and consideration of all people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background,
3. We acknowledge the need for sensitivity to, and consideration of, all people of culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and any person with a disability.
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.
 - ii) Safe and effective recruitment, training, supervision, support and resourcing.
 - iii) Appropriate and timely responses to all complaints of alleged misconduct and all other grievances.
 - iv) Pastoral care in responding to those who have been abused or harmed.
 - v) Safe and appropriate ministry to persons of concern.

5. We acknowledge the role of children, parents, guardians and the community in creating a culture of child safety and will actively engage with children and their parents, guardians and the wider community, inviting open communication and feedback.

6. We acknowledge the shared responsibility of the whole community for child safety and wellbeing, including parents, guardians and people in roles, offices and positions within the Church. As such, we will actively promote the role of parents, guardians and the wider community in the shared responsibility for child safety.

7. We are committed to thorough and effective governance for safe ministry to children and all vulnerable people at the Diocesan and parish level.

8. We will engage in continuous improvement of our acts, regulations, codes of conduct, policies, guidelines, procedures and related safe ministry documentation.

9. We will comply with all relevant secular legislation.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

All people in roles, offices and positions within the Church:

- Must take all reasonable and practicable steps to prevent or avoid risks of any abuse, racism, discrimination or harm, to members of the Church and the wider community arising from their involvement in any ministry.
- Must agree to adhere to acts, regulations, codes of conduct, policies, guidelines, procedures and related safe ministry documentation of the Diocese.
- Must take part in required screening, training and supervision for their role.

Clergy and the Parish Council must ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the parish or AAC complies with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Victoria) and the Diocesan Occupational Health and Safety Policy.

“People in religious ministry” _are mandatory reporters in Victoria (see Mandatory Reporting for people in religious ministry factsheet).

5. Specific roles under this Policy

The Archbishop:

- Is the Head of Entity for the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne for the Reportable Conduct Scheme matters under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Victoria).
- Is the Church authority for defined matters under the *Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016* (Anglican Diocese of Melbourne).
- Licenses and appoints clergy and lay ministers.

Archbishop in Council:

- Acts (with Kooyoora) as the Safe Ministry Authority of the Diocese under the *Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2007* of General Synod.

- Is the Church authority for defined matters under the *Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016* (Anglican Diocese of Melbourne).
- Approve this policy, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Procedure, Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing, and related safe ministry and child safety documentation for the Diocese.
- Oversees safe ministry governance bodies and resources.
- Oversees the implementation of this policy and related safe ministry documentation.
- Ensures office holders have adequate resources to carry out this policy and related safe ministry documentation.
- Approves, through the Governance and Nominations Committee, membership of the Safe Ministry Reference Group.

Assistant Bishops

- Support parishes to resolve misunderstandings and conflicts.
- Report, if it has not occurred already, all concerns in relation to risk of harm and any known persons of concern to Kooyoora.

Safe Ministry Reference Group:

- Provides an expert resource to the Archbishop and the Archbishop in Council on safe ministry to children and other vulnerable persons in parishes and AACs.
- Supports parishes and AACs to adhere to acts, regulations, codes of conduct, policies, guidelines, procedures and related safe ministry and child safety documentation of the Diocese.

Diocesan Safe Ministry and Inclusion Officer:

- Coordinates the development and implementation of this policy and related safe ministry and child safety documentation.
- Builds relationships with internal and external stakeholders, conducts risk assessments, advocates for cultural change, offers advice, and promotes safe ministry compliance and good practice across the Diocese.
- Oversees the delivery of safe ministry training across the Diocese.

Kooyoora Ltd:

- Promotes knowledge, understanding and observance of codes of conduct and child safety documentation in the Diocese.
- Implements and monitors reportable conduct, persons of concern, and the National Register Canon.
- Manages and administers clearances for clergy and lay people.
- Manages complaints and investigations of alleged misconduct, including making determinations and recommendations to the Church authority.
- Appoints members to professional standards' bodies to support safe ministry.
- Manages the Kooyoora Independent Redress Scheme and supports the Diocese's response to applications for redress under the National Redress Scheme.

Director of Episcopal Standards

- Manages complaints and investigations of alleged misconduct in relation to the Archbishop.

Clergy:

- Appoint people to roles, offices and positions, subject to obtaining any relevant safe ministry clearances.
- Implement, with parish councils, this policy and related safe ministry and child safety documentation within their parish or AAC.
- In the case of a Vicar, acting with the churchwardens, is the Church authority for persons of concern under the *Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016* (Anglican Diocese of Melbourne).
- Report, if it has not occurred already, all concerns in relation to risk of harm and any known persons of concern to Kooyoora.

Parish Council:

- Appoints a child safety officer in the parish or AAC, ensuring the Diocese is made aware of this appointment and given contact details.
- Implements, with clergy, this policy and related safe ministry and child safety documentation within their parish or AAC.
- Considers safe ministry and child safety as a standing item at parish council meetings.
- Ensures there is a clear link to this policy and related safe ministry and child safety documentation on the parish or AAC's website.
- In the case of churchwardens, acting with the Vicar, is the Church authority for persons of concern under the *Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016* (Anglican Diocese of Melbourne).

Authorised Stipendiary/Honorary Lay Minister (ASLM / ALHM):

- Reports, if it has not occurred already, all concerns in relation to risk of harm and any known persons of concern to Kooyoora.
- Works with the Parish Child Safe Officer and Clergy in the implementation this policy and related safe ministry documentation within their parish or AAC.

Parish Child Safety Officer

- Oversees child safety and wellbeing in the implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the Child Safety Policy for Children, the Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Procedure and related safe ministry and child safety documentation, including by keeping records for screening, training and risk management in the parish or AAC.
- Acts as the primary contact person for child safety in the parish or AAC.

3. Your Safe Ministry Roles

Consider your roles/s in both policies (Appendices A & B).

4. 11 Child Safe Standards (July 2022)

The Child Safe Standards (“the Standards”) came into effect in Victoria in January 2016. After five years, we have seen how the Standards improve safety for children and young people.

Changes have been made to make the Standards even stronger.

The new Standards set out minimum requirements and outline the actions organisations must take to keep children and young people safe. They provide more clarity for organisations and are more consistent with Standards in the rest of Australia.

The things organisations already do to keep children and young people safe will help them be compliant with the new Standards. In some areas, organisations will need to change or develop their current child safety policy, practices and organisational culture to meet the new Standards.

(Source CCYP = <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-CSS/Whats-new-overview-of-the-new-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf>)

Discussion implementation via the ACTION PLAN - self assessment

Parish implementation notes

5. Overcoming implementation 'hurdles'

We acknowledge the work and effort Parishes have put into implementation of Safe Ministry (including Professional Standards and Child Safety) over the past two decades.

We also acknowledge that the legislative and compliance changes brought about by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and the Victorian Parliamentary Enquiry, have led to a marked increase in the work related to implementation in this area.

The continuing evolution and increased compliance burden in this area create hurdles that Parishes need to identify and overcome towards successful and sustainable implementation of Safe Ministry related policy, procedures and practices.

In breakout groups

1. Identify the ongoing 'hurdles' to the Parish implementation of Safe Ministry and Child Safety polices and Diocesan the Child Safe Standards 'Action plan'.

2. Brainstorm some solutions or tips for overcoming each hurdle.

6. Implementation scenarios

The implementation scenarios below help to identify the Safe Ministry procedures that need to be implemented, and also help discuss pastoral and procedural responses in each case.

There are 8 scenarios for use in this session and for use with your parish in parish information sessions.

The facilitator will allot the scenarios for the purposes of this session.

Use of these scenarios: The following scenarios can also be used with your leaders to help them understand their responsibilities. These scenarios are ok to reproduce for non-commercial use.

Self-care statement: If any of these scenarios impact you negatively in any way, or if they raise concerns or issues from your past or present, please take the time to debrief with someone you trust and, if necessary, seek help from a counsellor.

Scenario 1 -Safe Ministry Requirements

Your parish has been implementing screening checks for your kids and your leaders for some years now, and the parish council is now going through the screening process with the other church volunteers in line with the Diocesan requirements. The volunteers have all been told about the new screening process which includes completing a Safe Ministry check, and agreeing to uphold Faithfulness in service, along with the specific requirements for their roles according to the Diocesan Protocol.

Robyn is a musician (piano player) in your Sunday services and has been on the team for more than a decade. She is a valuable member of the team and is a qualified Primary school teacher. Robyn comes to you (you are the coordinator of the musicians) and asks that she be exempt from going through this process. She says that as a teacher, she has already done Child Protection training, so she is aware of risk of harm indicators, and her mandatory reporting obligations. Robyn reminds you that she has given you her Working with children's check, that she has a code of conduct for work, and if that check and the training she has already completed are good enough for the Department, the church should be satisfied.

TASKS

1. Discuss Robyn's request for exemption. Consider, if exemptions are possible, who else should be exempt? If not, why not?
2. How can you help Robyn understand and accept her responsibilities as a church worker in relation to the screening, training and code of conduct (see appendices for policies and code)?
3. Discuss implementation hurdles to the policy requirements.

Scenario 2 – Duty of care and your ‘small step’

At your parish there is a small step. It is only half the size of a normal step and sometimes those with multifocal glasses trip up it. There have been discussions at parish council about the step as being a hazard, but there has never been any attempt to remedy it.

Sunday a month ago, one of the ladies who is more senior in years was on her way into the church building and was talking to her friend when her foot got caught on the small step.

She tried to stop herself from falling but ended up landing on her face.

Her friend called for help, first aid was provided, and an ambulance called.

At hospital she was diagnosed with a broken nose and very badly broken ankle.

The medical recommendation is for months of ongoing treatment and will be costly.

This week whilst you (the Vicar) are visiting her, she raises the costs on the ongoing physio-therapy for her ankle as cannot afford it, and asked that the church pay for it as the accident did happen at church.

Tasks:

1. Incident management - In the moment, at the time of the injury, discuss what would be a reasonable care for the lady.
2. Pastoral care and follow up – in the days following the accident what pastoral care steps could the parish consider for the lady who was injured?
3. Incident reporting- what is the Diocesan process for incident reporting including:
 - does the parish have a health and safety officer to report too?
 - Who does the parish report this too?
 - is it online, over the phone?
4. Duty of care – how might the parish respond to her request for the payment of the ongoing medical costs?
5. Reviewing incidents – who should and will review the incident and what steps might be implemented to minimise this type of incident from occurring in the future?

Scenario 3 – Glenn

Your Parish has been renewing the clearances process for church workers.

Glenn is a long-term volunteer at church in many capacities and he currently runs the sound desk during the morning services.

This year he has agreed to assist with the midweek afterschool kids club.

You have provided him with the relevant paperwork for Safe Ministry clearances.

He is evasive when reminded to hand in the paperwork, and then asks for a meeting with you (the Vicar).

During the meeting, Glenn mentions that he is not comfortable filling in the Safe Ministry Check form.

He is concerned about the section about past behaviours.

After some discussion, he then admits to sexually touching a child from your church 15 years ago. The child and family no longer attend.

Glenn has been a member of your congregation for 20 years.

Discuss

1. How do you respond to Glenn in that conversation?
2. What do you need to do next?
3. Relevant Diocesan Procedures.

Scenario 4 – Social media

Jeremiah has been a member of Highgrove Church for 25 years. During that time they have been involved in church leadership for many years.

The Highgrove Church has a Facebook page that is used by church members for making comments and sharing information that may be of interest to other members of the church.

About a month ago, Gus, a new Christian and relatively new member of Highgrove Church posted an article about the consumption of alcohol by Christians. The article promoted a total abstinence of alcohol consumption. Jeremiah responded to the article by commenting that this was a “zealot approach” and there was nothing wrong with alcohol consumption in moderation.

Gus commented on Jeremiah’s post by stating that he shared the view of the article and then said that if people were truly Christian they would follow the practice advocated by the article. He went on to say that the Highgrove Church should consider replacing all wine used during Communion with grape juice and he intended writing to the parish council on this matter.

Jeremiah posted a further comment stating that Gus had no right the question people’s values and Christian commitment and he found Gus’ comments offensive and that Highgrove Church didn’t need people with arrogant attitudes who knew nothing about how Highgrove Church functioned.

The interchange between Jeremiah and Gus had been noted and followed by a number of church members and Parish Council was contacted by a few people to ask them to intervene in the dialogue between Jeremiah and Gus. A number of people complained that the interactions online were causing them to feel upset and anxious about having any interaction with either Jeremiah or Gus in face to face contact.

Discuss:

1. How might the Parish Council respond to:
 - a. The members of the congregation who had complained about the interactions online by Jeremiah and Gus?
 - b. Jeremiah and Gus?

2. Diocesan help and or procedures that may be relevant.

Scenario 5 – Fred

Fred and Betty both serve as committed members of your team.

Fred has been involved for more than decade whereas Betty only commenced serving a few months ago.

Fred is a strong personality who is passionate about the ministry. People have often commented that Fred has strong opinions but he knows what he is talking about.

Betty has asked to speak to her Team Leader about Fred.

When they meet together, Betty shared that she feels belittled by Fred's comments directed towards her and threatened by his tone. She disclosed that she also feels harassed by the way he dominates conversation. She said she is becoming more and more fearful of coming to help at the program.

The Team Leader asked Betty whether she has felt safe enough to raise her concerns with Fred directly? Betty said she has tried to talk to Fred about his manner, but he said that he didn't mean anything by it. Betty mentioned that she had also spoken to one of the other team members about the way Fred treats her. The team member said, "That's just Fred, we just love him the way he is."

Discuss:

1. What could the Team Leader do to address Betty's concerns?
2. What does the Team Leader need to do next?
3. Relevant Diocesan Procedures.

Scenario 6 – Bill

Towards the end of Youth Group, one of the small group leaders approaches the youth coordinator to explain that Vanessa, a 13 year old in her group has just disclosed some child protection concerns about herself.

She asks to come and talk with Vanessa about what needs to happen next.

Vanessa disclosed that she spends a lot of time with another family in the church especially with their daughter. Vanessa disclosed the comments that have been made by her friend's dad when her friend is not in the room, such as talking about her good looks, her beautiful hair, and how her body is changing into a young lady.

Vanessa also said that her friend's dad had started sending Vanessa Snapchat messages of himself pulling funny faces and asking her to send him photos of herself. Yesterday, her friend's dad requested that Vanessa send him a Snapchat of her legs, belly and one of her in her swimming costume; and that this would be their secret.

When they speak with Vanessa about what needs to happen next, Vanessa adds that the family she is talking about is her friend Suzanne's family. Suzanne's dad is your Youth Leader, Bill.

Discuss:

1. What could the Coordinator do to address Vanessa's concerns?
2. What does the Coordinator need to do next?
3. Relevant Diocesan Procedures.

7. Question & Answer session

Thank you for participating in this Safe Ministry Implementation Course.

Please refer your questions to the Diocesan Safe Ministry and Inclusion Officer:

P: +61 3 9653 4220

E: safeministry@melbourneanglican.org.au

Handout Appendices

A: [Safe Ministry Policy](#) (updated April 2023)

B: [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)

C: [Child Safety Policy for Children \(Child friendly language version on the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy\)](#)

D: [Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Procedure](#)

E: [Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing](#) (updated April 2023)

F: [Parish Self-Assessment Template to be used with Action Plan for Meeting New Victorian Child Safe Standards 2023](#)