

RATIONALE

The Diocese affirms that all people have the right to be spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically safe.

The Bible identifies classes of vulnerable people who were to be protected and given special care and treatment in society because of their powerlessness such as the poor, widow, orphan and alien (Ex 22:21-22, Deut 10:17-19, Jer 22:2-4, James 1:27). As His people we are called to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly before him (Micah 6:8).

The Anglican Church in Australia has made a commitment to keeping all people safe through the passing of canons and ordinances relating to Professional Standards, such as “Faithfulness in Service – A national code of conduct for Clergy and Church Workers”, “The General Synod Safe Ministry to Children canon 2017”, both of which have been adopted by our Synod, as well as the Professional Standards Ordinance 2017 and the Clergy Standards and Discipline Ordinance 2017. Further to this, our parishes and special districts operate under the Parish Governance and Structures Ordinance 2015 which seeks to set out the safe and respectful running of ministry at the local level.

We also live in a country that legislates for people’s safety, including legislation and regulations for the safety of children and vulnerable adults. Our Safe Ministry Policy takes into consideration relevant legislation and regulations such as, but not limited to the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act 2011, the NSW Crimes Act 1900, The NSW Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, and the related Child Protection (Working with Children Regulation 2013).

Our policy has been developed to help us live out our Biblical mandate and our responsibilities as part of the Anglican Church of Australia and under Government legislation and regulations. This includes application of the 10 Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional abuse

POLICY AIMS

- To ensure that leaders and programs are safe.
- To ensure that all people are respected and valued.
- To minimise the risk of abuse, ministry misconduct and the misuse of positional power.
- To ensure that all cases of suspected abuse, ministry misconduct, and grievances are handled in a fair and just manner, that is, to afford all parties natural justice (also known as procedural fairness).

POLICY DEFINITIONS

Child: a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Young Persons: are a special class of child (ages 16-17years).

Safe Environment: discharges duty of care by taking steps to keep all those in our care safe, including, for example, spiritual, physical, sexual, emotional abuse (including bullying) or neglect.

The Safety Team: works under the oversight of Parish Council in each parish and special district. The Safety Team, under the leadership of the Safety Team leader, is responsible for the oversight of the implementation of the WHS and Safe Ministry Policy and supporting documentation and processes in parishes and special districts.

Approval for Ministry: a written process of accountability, whereby the Vicar, with the assistance of Parish Council, reviews safety plans for a ministry program to allow that program to proceed under the parish’s name.

Safe Leader: has been through a recruitment process, understands responsibilities, is supervised and is an accountable team player, also known as a volunteer church worker in the Diocese.

Safe Program: is one in which all risks have been assessed and events thought through and planned. Safe Programs have the approval of Parish Council.

Program (event) Leaders: are responsible for teams and programs. They complete safety management plans for their individual programs.

SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

The Safe Ministry Policy applies to all Leaders, that is clergy and church workers (paid and voluntary) associated with the ministry of the Anglican Diocese of Armidale, including Diocesan appointments to non-parish diocesan organisations.

POLICY STATEMENTS

The Diocese commits to the:

a) safe recruitment of Leaders

- we will use our **Diocesan Due Diligence – Appointment Protocol** to screen all clergy and lay licensed church workers and volunteer church workers in child related roles. This includes the Working with Children Check 2012, relevant psychological testing and referee checks, and
- we will, where practicable, hold to a minimum six months church attendance requirement for all prospective volunteers;

b) adequate training of Leaders

- we require all Leaders to attend **a Safe Ministry workshop** within their first 3 months of ministry and to attend a refresher workshop every three years, and
- we require all Leaders to attend additional ministry-specific training as mandated by the Diocese and/or parish or special district;

c) continued supervision of Leaders

- we commit to on-going leadership training, supervision and support for Clergy and church workers, in accordance with Diocesan policies and procedures;

d) responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse), ministry misconduct, grievances and conflict in the church

- all Clergy and Church workers, consistent with other legal obligations, will report disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, and/or misconduct, forthwith to the Director of Professional Standards (DPS).

If a complaint is made against a lay person, the Professional Standards Committee will, with the DPS, manage the allegation or complaint in accordance with Diocesan policies and procedures.

If a complaint is made against a member of the clergy, the Board of Enquiry, with the DPS, manage the allegation or complaint in accordance with Diocesan policies and procedures,

- all Clergy and Church Workers must abide by our Diocesan Code of Conduct – *Faithfulness in Service*. All alleged breaches of Faithfulness in Service will be dealt with under the appropriate diocesan process, and
- where a leader has an allegation of ministry misconduct made against them we will provide all parties involved with appropriate support, and seek Diocesan assistance for a just and fair resolution; and

e) safe environments in our ministry programs

- we will serve participants as servants of Christ, commit to the good news of Jesus and lead in spiritually non-abusive ways,

- we will afford participants a reasonable say in the programs and the activities in which they participate by fostering and valuing their ideas, and encouraging participation,
- we will obtain appropriate information relating to the program participants, including children's health and family situation, to ensure that we are able to care for their physical and emotional needs,
- all leaders will discharge their duty of care through the use of forms, checklists and templates for establishment and maintenance of safe environments in our church,
- **a Safety Team** is required in each parish and special district to establish and maintain: WHS, fire safety, building safety, first aid, food safety, safe transport, incident and emergency procedures, and
- person/s charged with the oversight of ministry programs in parishes and special districts, such as Program leaders, are required to complete an annual written **Ministry Approval Process** and submit this to Parish Council.

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy is to be reviewed prior to December 2022