

DUE DILIGENCE PROTOCOL

SCOPE

This protocol describes the appointment and re-licensing screening requirements for all clergy in the Diocese, all licensed Lay Ministers, lay leaders working with children, young people and New South Wales (NSW) State School Special Religious Education teachers.

In the Diocese of Armidale the Bishop is ultimately responsible for the appointment of all clergy and church workers in the Diocese. The Bishop in partnership with Vicars and Ministry Leaders is responsible for ensuring that all those who volunteer or are appointed to paid positions in parishes and special districts are properly screened prior to appointment in accordance with this protocol.

COMMITMENT

Our Diocese is committed to our pastoral, duty of care, legal and insurance responsibilities.

We desire that all ministries are spiritually, emotionally and physically safe.

Diocesan parishes, special districts and ministries should be person-valuing and respectful spaces free from abuse and harm, to God's glory.

We must ensure we have done all that is reasonably practicable to ensure we have safe leaders in positions of power and trust.

TERMINOLOGY

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

Children and Youth Positions: those persons engaged in ministry to persons aged 0 – 18 years of age.

Clergy person: means an ordained person.

Lay Church Worker: means a non-ordained church worker including licensed Lay Ministers.

Overview Worksheet: means the Overview of Process and Requirements for Recruitment, Appointment and Licensing.

Safe Ministry Officer (SMO): means the person nominated as the person who will record and update Safe Ministry records in a parish or special district.

SaMRO: means 'Safe Ministry Records' which is Sydney Diocese's Safe Ministry recording data base used by the Armidale Diocese.

SRE Policy: Policy and Guidelines for the Implementation of Special Religious Education (SRE) in the Diocese of Armidale.

Stored as confidential: means the documents are to be stored in a secure location to be accessed only by legally authorized persons.

Volunteer Church Worker: means a church worker appointed or elected to an unpaid position of leadership or responsibility in a parish or special district.

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

WWCC: Working with Children Check (NSW 2012).

Young Person: means a person who is 16-17 years but less than 18 years.

PRINCIPLES

The principles used to implement due diligence includes:

1. **rigour** – we require that all clergy in the Diocese regardless of licence or appointment and all licensed Lay Ministers and lay leaders working with children, young people undertake the relevant screening; and
2. **accountability** – we need to be able to show that we have done all we can to ensure safe leaders are ministering to vulnerable people.

CATEGORIES OF APPOINTMENT

- A. Clergy and Lay – Bishop’s Licence
- B. SRE teachers in NSW State Schools
- C. Children’s and youth-related positions (church workers)
- D. All other volunteer helpers in ministry teams (church workers)

PROCESS

The process for each category is as follows:

A: all Clergy and Laity applying for a Bishop’s Licence

1. complete the Safe Ministry Questionnaire for Licensees,
2. Safe Ministry Checks to be completed in accordance with the Process Overview worksheet, ie- Referees to be contacted, names to be checked against the National Register, WWCC number valid and verified, and Safe Ministry training to be current-all recorded on SaMRO, and;
3. all workflow and documentation to be managed by the Registry’s Safe Ministry delegate;

B: Teachers of SRE in NSW Government Schools

Process for NEW teachers:

1. Vicar to interview each SRE teacher,
2. Vicar to obtain a new teacher’s SRE Engagement Form and Safe Ministry Check – Volunteers from the applicant,
3. Vicar or Parish Safe Ministry Officer to verify the applicant’s WWCC number,

4. Vicar to ask Professional Standards Director to check National Register
5. Vicar or Parish Safe Ministry Officer to ensure Safe Ministry training is current,
6. SRE teacher has completed SRE accreditation training (found on Diocesan website)
7. Vicar or Parish Safe Ministry Officer updates the SaMRO with relevant details,
8. Vicar ensures compliance with SRE Policy, and
9. Vicar issues Authorisation Card to applicant;

Process for continuing teachers (authorization lasts for two years):

1. SRE teacher to maintain ongoing training and supervision

C: Children and Youth positions over 18 years of age (church workers)

1. Vicar to obtain a 'Safe Ministry Check – Volunteers from the applicant
2. Applicant to provide a WWCC number,
3. Vicar or Parish Safe Ministry Officer to verify the applicant's WWCC number,
4. Vicar or Parish Safe Ministry Officer to ensure Safe Ministry training current
5. Vicar or Parish Safe Ministry Officer to update SaMRO with relevant details,
6. Vicar to obtain National Register check
7. Vicar to check referees
8. Vicar and/or Ministry Leader conducts a Leadership Role Interview with the applicant.

D: Children and Youth positions 13-17 years of age (church workers)

1. Vicar to obtain a 'Safe Ministry Check- 13-17 years of age- Volunteers from the applicant
2. Vicar or Parish Safe Ministry Officer to ensure Safe Ministry training current
3. Vicar or Parish Safe Ministry Officer to update SaMRO with relevant details,
4. Vicar to obtain National Register check
5. Vicar to check referees
6. Vicar and/or Ministry Leader conducts a Leadership Role Interview with the applicant.

E: All other Volunteer Church Workers

1. Vicar to obtain a 'Safe Ministry Check – Volunteers' from the applicant, and
2. Vicar and/or Ministry Leader conducts a Leadership Role Interview with the applicant.

NOTES REGARDING WORKFLOW

General Notes on Process

Licensees

1. All screening documentation will be issued from, and returned to, the Registry, where it will be checked for completion.
2. The Registry will process all 'Safe Ministry Check - Licensees' and prepare a risk assessment for the Bishop for interview and action. In cases where the applicant answers Yes to questions on the Safe Ministry Check Questionnaire, the Check will be referred to the Director of Professional Standards for advice on reasonable risk assessment measures.
3. The Registry will apply for National Register check.
4. Current Safe Ministry training will be checked.
5. In the event of an adverse finding from one of the Background Checks, the Registry will notify the Bishop and Director of Professional Standards immediately.
6. Once all checks have been completed, a clearance will be issued.
7. Once the clearance has been provided, a licence will be issued.

SRE Teachers

The protocol is to be implemented at parish and special district level. All original documentation to be kept securely at the parish or special district.

Children and Youth, and All Other Volunteers (C, D and E above)

1. The protocol is to be implemented at parish and special district level. In cases where the applicant answers Yes to questions on the Safe Ministry Check Questionnaire, the protocol for Yes answers to Safe Ministry Check Questionnaire will be followed.

All original documentation to be kept securely at the parish or special district.

Bars on WWCC Verifications

For all positions requiring WWCC any bar found upon verification must be referred immediately to the Director of Professional Standards.

Supervision and Review – Clergy

All Clergy and Lay Stipendiary Ministers in parish- or special district-based appointments are encouraged to enter into a professional supervision arrangement with a senior colleague or other suitably qualified person.

Limit of Bishop's Licences

All Bishop's Licences issued will be valid for three (3) years, or such shorter period as the Bishop determines. At the end of the licensing period, the licensee must complete a screening review.

Eligibility for Appointment as a Volunteer Church Worker

It is recommended, that all volunteers are a member of a parish or special district for at least six (6) months before entering into a leadership role.

Supervision and Review – Volunteer Church Worker

Program leaders or Vicars are to meet regularly with ministry leaders for support. Also all lay leaders in child, young person or vulnerable adult ministry leadership (volunteers or paid) are required to complete a Ministry Review annually with their Vicar.

Limit of Status

Completed screening requirements will be valid for three (3) years or unless a lay church worker moves to another parish. At the end of that period the lay church worker must complete a screening review.

DOCUMENTS AND SCREENING CHECKS USED TO SUPPORT THIS PROTOCOL

Documents

- Faithfulness in Service
- Leadership Role Interview
- Ministry Review – Lay Church Workers
- Process Overview
- Safe Ministry Check - Licensees
- Safe Ministry Check – Volunteers
- Safe Ministry Policy
- Safe Ministry Return
- SRE Teacher's Engagement Form

Screening Checks

- Anglican Church of Australia National Register Check
- WWCC – Paid staff and Volunteers

REVIEW

This protocol is to be reviewed prior to December 2022