

The Anglican Parish of Diamond Creek

# Child Safety Policy Summary

*Committed to the safety and wellbeing of every young person.*

Note: This is *summary* of our full Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct. Full copies can be found at online ([stjohnsdc.org.au/safe](http://stjohnsdc.org.au/safe)).

As a Christian community, meeting together to worship God in the name of Jesus Christ, we affirm our commitment to the safety of each child and young person who interacts with our community. God's word makes it clear that all people are created equal and that any position of power is to be accepted humbly and with the intent of serving others, never to harm them.

Our faith motivates us to love everyone and never to discriminate against anyone, especially on the basis of age, race, gender, language, sexual orientation, disability or family/social background. Therefore, we seek to protect the safety of all young people without exception. We want our church to be a place where young people can come to know and experience the love of Jesus and his followers.



**Contents of this document:**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Standards and Practices   | 3  |
| Training  | 4  |
| Communication   | 4  |
| Adult:Child Ratios  | 5  |
| Driving Children and Youth  | 5  |
| Responding to an instance of Child Abuse or suspected Child Abuse | 6  |
| How to make a complaint   | 8  |
| Legal Framework for this policy                                   | 9  |
| Implementation and review of this policy                          | 9  |
| Definitions   | 10 |

**The purpose of this policy is to:**

- Make our church a safe place for everyone, especially people under 18 years of age.
- Minimise the risk of abuse.
- Ensure all cases of suspected abuse/misconduct are handled thoroughly.
- Ensure leaders and programs are safe.
- Follow National and State laws around child safety.

## We commit to these standards and practices:

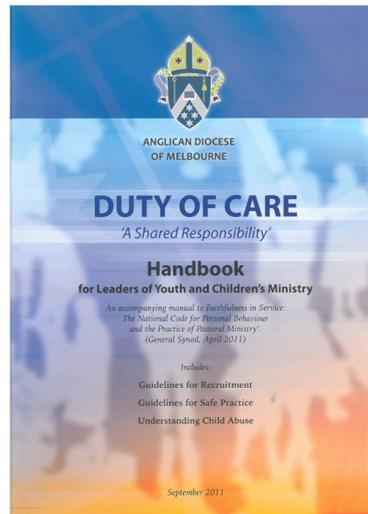
Thorough screening of every person who holds a leadership position in a ministry that has contact with people under 18 years of age.

- All adults working with children in our church are required to have current Working With Children Checks.
  - For ongoing ministries, the WWCC must have our church as a registered organisation.
  - For one-off events the WWCC can be checked online that day.
- Victorian Police Checks and registration with the Anglican National Register (once it is established) will also be required of every person who holds a leadership position in a ministry that includes children or is entrusted with sensitive, confidential information.
  - Includes members of Parish Council.
  - Police Checks will be required at least once every three years.
- Leaders in roles that involve teaching and/or pastoral care of children will be required to sign a Parish Code of Conduct and a Anglican Diocese of Melbourne Child Safe Code of Conduct at least once every three years.
  - If the Code of Conduct is updated, leaders will be required to sign a new copy within the next 12 months.
  - Before being appointed these leaders must go through an application process that includes being recommended by two Christian people of good reputation.
- Some ministries may choose to write an extra Code of Conduct/Job Description that is specific to that group's activities.
  - E.g. Ministries with disabled children may need some extra guidelines for leaders so that the particular needs of each child are accommodated.
  - E.g. Cross-cultural ministries may need their leaders to be extra sensitive to cultural differences.



## Training:

- All leaders to read and sign the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct.
- All leaders in a ministry that includes children will do Professional Standards Training at least once every three years.
  - This will include receiving the Duty of Care Handbook from the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne.
- The following leaders will also be required to do OHS training at least once every three years:
  - Church Warden, Parish Council Member, Creche/Children's/Youth ministry coordinator.
- All ministry teams leading children will run a short refresher session on OHS and Professional Standards every year.
- Every leader at our church will have a supervisor for that role who will help keep them accountable to our child safety standards.



## Communication:

- The "Duty of Care" handbook from the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne will be available at all our locations for anyone to take a copy of and can also be found online at: [stjohnsdc.org.au/safe](http://stjohnsdc.org.au/safe)
- A booklet entitled "Information for people thinking about making a complaint", published by the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, is to be easily accessible at each of our locations at online at: [stjohnsdc.org.au/safe](http://stjohnsdc.org.au/safe)
- To help children know that we care for them, we will exhibit child-friendly posters and statements about our values and standards.
- Regularly let children know who they can talk to if they are concerned about their own safety or the safety of someone else.

## Adult/Child Ratios:

- For children aged 1-10, there must be two adult leaders present for all activities.
- Leaders must not be one-on-one with children aged 11+ in private, unseen places.
  - One on one is acceptable in a public place where both people are visible and easily interrupted.
- The following ratios are the minimum requirement:
  - 2 adults to 6 infants  

  - 2 adults to 10 children under 3 years old  

  - 2 adults to 20 children aged 3 to 5 years old  

  - 2 adults to 30 children/youth in school age groups.  


## Driving Children and Youth<sup>1</sup>

When making transport arrangements for driving children and youth, leaders should take reasonable steps to ensure that:

- All drivers or operators are licensed, responsible, experienced, and not impaired by alcohol or any other mind-altering or addictive substance.
- All drivers must have at least a Probationary P2 license (Green P Plates).
- All motor vehicles and other forms of transport used are registered, third party insured, safe, and fitted with appropriate child restraints or safety devices (e.g. seat belts, life jackets)
- Leaders are not alone with a young person in a motor vehicle.

Leaders are given authority to:

- Refuse to allow a car to carry young people, if the car appears unsafe (e.g. has bad tires), or fails any of the above conditions,



1: Taken from the policy approved by Parish Council October 2016. Next Review: September 2019.

- Refuse to allow a driver to carry young people if the driver appears impaired in any of the above ways, or if they fail any of the above conditions.

## **Responding to an instance of Child Abuse or suspected Child Abuse<sup>2</sup>:**

Please follow these steps carefully and thoroughly. Even if you have no proof of abuse, a genuine concern is enough to ensure you **MUST** act.

*Communicate your concerns:*

- Immediately share your concerns with the leader you directly report to and they will take it to more senior levels of leadership as appropriate. The person you report to will then discuss with you what future actions should be taken.
  - The Senior Minister must be made aware of any situations that are serious or illegal in nature.
  - Examples of who to report to:
    - If you're a team member, report to the team leader.
    - If you're a children's ministry leader, report to the Children's Minister.
    - A Parish Council member would report directly to the Senior Minister.
  - This means it's important that every volunteer knows who their direct report is. If you don't know, keep asking until you get a clear answer.
- If you are unsure whether the situation is a criminal matter, report it to the police for guidance<sup>3</sup>.

***“Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.”<sup>3</sup> - Victorian State Government***

- If the situation you are concerned about is criminal in nature then the Police **MUST** be contacted. This can be done in consultation with the leader you report to but no criminal activity, proven or suspected, must be left out of the hands of the police.
  - If your concern is about the person you report to directly (they are the abuser), then take your concerns to the person who *they* report to.

<sup>2</sup>: See the 'Definitions' section for a definition of abuse.

<sup>3</sup>: [www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence)

- E.g. If your concern is with a junior staff member, speak to a senior staff member.
- If your concern is with a senior leader at our church (e.g. The Senior Minister, Warden or Parish Council Member) you may need to go beyond our church structures to ensure the situation is dealt with. Under those circumstances, please read the “How to make a complaint” section below.

*Things to consider:*

- If you believe the child is in imminent risk of harm then you, and the person you report to, must act immediately. Seek advice from senior church leaders and the police if you are unsure how to act.
- It’s important that, at all steps in your response, you work hard to keep strict confidentiality within our church leadership structures so as to protect the dignity of the victim and the person being accused.
  - At some point, serious abuse situations may need to be made public but this should always been done in consultation with senior staff and the Parish Council/Wardens.
- If your concern has arisen from a specific incident, fill in an Incident Report Form available onsite or at [stjohnsdc.org.au/safe](http://stjohnsdc.org.au/safe)

*What if the issue has not been dealt with?*

- If your concern has not been acted on appropriately please report to the Director of Professional Standards directly (see details below).



## **How to make a complaint**

This information is intended to help you if you wish to make a complaint, have been or are being abused or harassed by clergy (ordained staff), church staff or a Parish Council member, including Regional Bishops, in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne.

The Director of Professional Standards responds to all complaints of misconduct including sexual, physical, spiritual or emotional abuse by Clergy or Church leaders. The Director is as independent as possible from the Diocese but is paid by the Diocese.

The first step in making a complaint is to call the recorded information line at any time on **1800 135 246**. All information provided to this service is strictly confidential. The person taking a message on this number will ask you to give a name and your phone number or address so that the Director can contact you as soon as possible. Alternatively, you can write to the Director:

**Director of Professional Standards  
Anglican Diocese of Melbourne  
PO Box 329  
Canterbury VIC 3126**

*Mark your envelope Confidential*

The aim is to solve complaints as quickly as possible. There are different ways of dealing with complaints - informally, formally or referring the matter to another Church professional standards body or to a child protection authority or to the Police.

Make a complaint by:

Phone: **1800 135 246**

*or*

Mail: **Director of Professional Standards  
Anglican Diocese of Melbourne  
PO Box 329  
Canterbury VIC 3126**

## **What is the legal framework for our Child Safe Policy?**

This policy reflects legislation and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

### **National Legislation**

National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children "Protecting Children is Everyone's Business" 2009 – 2020 (Commonwealth of Australia)

### **State Legislation**

*Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.)

*Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic.)

## **How will this policy be implemented and reviewed?**

The Staff are responsible for day-by-day implementation as well as other key volunteers as appropriate. Parish Council is responsible for review.

- Staff will review the implementation of this policy every six months.
  - Suggested timing: November and May.
- Parish Council will review this policy every year.
- All updates are to be made in plain English so as to be easy to understand for young people.
- New staff are to be thoroughly educated in our Child Safety policies and practices.

This policy is to be made publicly available onsite and online.

Once a year, all our Sunday services are to have a focus on Child Safety that includes practical examples of how these policies might need to be put into action.

## Definitions:

**Abuse** includes but is not limited to:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Family Violence
- Sexual Abuse
- Grooming
- Neglect

A **child**, for the purposes of this document, is any person under the age of 18.

A **diocese** is a region-based grouping of churches under the authority of an archbishop and bishops. Our church is part of the 'Anglican Diocese of Melbourne'.

**Parish Council** is a group of elected volunteer leaders who oversee the operation and administration of a church. The Senior Minister leads the Parish Council.

**Wardens** are members of Parish Council but have extra responsibilities around things like staffing, finance and property.

A **Senior Minister** might under some circumstances be called a **Senior Pastor**, **Vicar** or **Priest in Charge**.

Quick Guide to deal with concerns:



Make a complaint by:

Phone: **1800 135 246**

*or*

Mail: **Director of Professional Standards  
Anglican Diocese of Melbourne  
PO Box 329  
Canterbury VIC 3126**