

- Applies To:
- |                          |  |                          |                               |                          |                               |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Anglican Schools Commission                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> | Diocesan Services Commission  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Episcopate & Leadership                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Financial Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ministry Education Commission |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Parishes & Other Mission Agencies Commission |                          |                               |                          |                               |
- Related Documents:
- |                          |           |                          |      |                          |       |
|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Procedure | <input type="checkbox"/> | Form | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other |
|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|-------|

## MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHBISHOP

Church workers are servants and leaders in the church's ministry. They are in privileged positions which carry significant responsibilities and trust. Church workers must do all in their power to ensure that children in the Church are safe and protected from all forms of harm including child sexual abuse.

God calls us to share in Christian ministry. Church workers entrusted with the wellbeing of children must be selected with great care. The wider community rightly expects this.

Our *Policy for the Protection of Children in Ministry Units* provides important standards to help ensure our children are protected and kept safe.

The policy sets out measures to help prevent child abuse in ministry settings. It also makes clear how church workers and others are to respond to information about child sexual abuse or harm. The Policy complements and supports our other safe ministry policies.

The Church's mission includes pursuing and advocating for social justice and the care of people in the community, particularly children and vulnerable persons. This policy supports that mission.

I commend the Policy to you and ask that you do your utmost to ensure that our ministries are safe for children and all people.

## APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This Policy and its Procedures replace the *Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Children – Parishes* (June 2010).

This Policy applies to all ministry units within the Anglican Church Southern Queensland, except for St John's College Within the University of Queensland, Anglicare, Anglican Schools and Education and Care Services.

## RELATED LAWS AND POLICIES

### Relevant Legislation and Law

- [Criminal Code 1899](#)
- [Child Protection Act 1999](#)
- [Civil Liability Act 2003](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011](#)
- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000](#)
- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Regulation 2020](#)

## Related Documents

- [Policy – Risk Management Strategy for Child and Youth Ministries in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland](#)
- [Safe Ministry to Children Canon](#)
- [Code of Conduct for Ministry to Children in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland](#)
- [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)
- [Policy for Safe Ministry in a parish where there is a risk of sexual abuse by a Person of Concern](#)
- [Policy – Mandatory Child Protection Training](#)
- [Policy – Professional Ethics Training for Ordinands, Licensed Persons and Certain Lay Church Workers](#)
- [Policy – Requirements for Blue Cards or Exemption Cards](#)
- [Professional Standards Canon](#)
- [Protocol for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct](#)
- [Qualification and Credential Policy](#)

## Associated Procedures and Guidelines

- [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse in Ministry Units](#)
- [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Signs of Harm in Ministry Units](#)
- [Procedure and Information for Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children in Ministry Units](#)
- [Guidelines for Engaging With Children, Families and Communities](#)
- [Guidelines for Outdoor Activities with Children](#)
- [Guidelines for Use of Digital Mediums with Children](#)
- [Guidelines for Transporting Children](#)
- [Guidelines on Children and Appropriate Touch](#)

## 1: DEFINITIONS

**ACSQ** means the Anglican Church Southern Queensland.

**Child** means any person under the age of 18 years.

**Child Sexual Abuse** includes grooming, and any abusive behaviour with a child for the sexual gratification of another person, as well as any other conduct falling within the definition of a 'child sexual offence' under the [Criminal Code 1899](#) (including the possession, making or distribution of child exploitation material).

**Church worker** means a person who is:

- i. a member of the clergy;
- ii. a person employed by a ministry unit; or
- iii. a person holding a position or performing a function with the actual or apparent authority of a ministry leader or ministry unit, including a volunteer.

**Harm** means any detrimental effect of a significant nature, other than child sexual abuse, to a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused, but it may result from physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect. Harm may be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance, or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

**Hazard** means a potential source of danger or risk.

**Ministry leader** means the Archbishop, or a person or body having administrative authority for a ministry unit, to license, appoint, authorise, dismiss or suspend a Church worker.

**Ministry unit** includes a parish, any body corporate, organisation or association that exercises ministry within, or on behalf of ACSQ, and which is controlled by ACSQ, but for the purposes of this policy does not include St John's College within the University of Queensland, an Anglican School, an Anglican Education and Care Service or Anglicare.

**Ministry to Children** means work of a kind where a person:

- a) is required to hold a Blue Card or Exemption Card;
- b) exercises a pastoral ministry which has direct, regular and not incidental contact with children;
- c) has contact with children during an overnight activity (such as camps and similar activities);
- d) has close, personal contact with children (such as changing clothes, washing and toileting);
- e) supervises the ministry of a person within paragraphs (a) to (d);
- f) recommends or determines whether an action is to be taken under a professional standards process;
- g) provides support to a person under a professional standards process;
- h) recommends or determines standards and guidelines for safe ministry to children or with Persons of Concern; or
- i) recommends, determines or supervises safe ministry in a parish with a Person of Concern.

**Office of Professional Standards** or **OPS** means the Director of Professional Standards or an Associate Director of Professional Standards, as appointed under the *Professional Standards Canon*.

**Parish Priest** means a member of the clergy licensed by the Archbishop and appointed to the charge of a Parish. It includes a Rector, Priest-in-Charge and Locum Priest.

**Plausible** means having an appearance of truth or reason.

**Reasonable belief** means that an adult gains information that causes the adult to believe on reasonable grounds, or ought reasonably to cause the adult to believe, that child sexual abuse is being or has been committed against a child by another adult.

**Reasonable suspicion** means a person acting reasonably being inclined to accept information as true rather than reject it as false. The information does not need to be well-founded or checked to be factually correct.

**Safeguarder** means a person or persons nominated by the Parish Council to receive and respond to information regarding a child being harmed or sexually abused under the terms of this Policy and its Procedures.

**Sexual Misconduct** in relation to Church workers has the same meaning as provided under the [Protocol for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct](#).

## 2: POLICY STATEMENT

The Anglican Church Southern Queensland (ACSQ) is committed to ensuring that our Church workers who work with children are trustworthy and professional in everything they do. ACSQ has implemented a range of policies and procedures to support this objective.

All Church workers engaged in ministry to children are expected to be familiar with the terms of this Policy and its Procedures.

In addition to being familiar with this Policy and its Procedures, all Ministry leaders engaged in ministry to children are expected to be familiar with (see clause 6 for further details) the:

1. [Policy – Risk Management Strategy for Child and Youth Ministries in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland](#)
2. [Safe Ministry to Children Canon](#)
3. [Code of Conduct for Ministry to Children in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland](#)
4. [Protocol for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct](#)
5. [Qualification and Credential Policy](#)
6. [Policy – Requirements for Blue Cards or Exemption Cards](#)
7. [Policy – Mandatory Child Protection Training](#)
8. [Policy – Professional Ethics Training for Ordinands, Licensed Persons and Certain Lay Church Workers](#)
9. [Policy for Safe Ministry in a parish where there is a risk of sexual abuse by a Person of Concern](#)

## 3: OUR VALUES AND ETHOS

Church workers must respect the Gospel values and ethos of the Anglican Church when dealing with children. Those values and ethos are reflected in the following passages from scripture:

*Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a real blessing. (Psalm 127:3)*

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. (Matthew 18:1-5)*

## 4: KEY PRINCIPLES

1. In every action taken or decision made in relation to a child, the child’s safety, wellbeing and best interests are paramount.
2. All children have rights, including the right to dignity, privacy, safety and respect.
3. Any sexual behaviour between an adult and a child is a crime.
4. Abusive acts by any person towards a child are not only a breach of the law, but also a profound breach of trust, and an act of professional misconduct.

5. No Church worker is permitted to continue to work in their position if it is plausible that there is an unacceptable risk of harm to a child by that Church worker.
6. Children have a responsibility to respect others and comply with safe practices.

## 5: PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONDING TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND HARM

1. To ensure information about child sexual abuse or potential child sexual abuse by any person, whether an adult or child, is properly investigated, such information must be reported to the appropriate authorities/bodies, as set out in the [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse in Ministry Units](#).
2. To ensure information about a child being harmed or possibly harmed by any person, whether by an adult or child, is properly investigated, such information must be reported to the appropriate authorities/bodies, as set out in the [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Signs of Harm in Ministry Units](#).
3. ACSQ representatives are to assist state authorities to which a report is made.
4. To protect confidentiality, privacy and any investigation, information on child sexual abuse or harm must only be shared with those who “need to know” that information.
5. In accordance with clause 13 and the [Protocol for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct](#), ACSQ supports any person (whether an adult or a child) who provides information that they have suffered harm. ACSQ also supports any person who reported information about child sexual abuse or harm to a child.
6. Natural justice, procedural fairness and respect will be afforded to any Church worker alleged to have committed child sexual abuse or to have harmed a child, and they will be kept advised of any investigation, excepting where there is a request by a state investigative authority to not advise a person the subject of allegation or information.
7. ACSQ officers, by cooperating with authorities, will take action in accordance with the law and its policies to ensure any allegation of child sexual abuse or harm is properly investigated, and any continuing risk to children addressed.

## 6: LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

### Blue Cards

The [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000](#) requires all persons who are employed or work voluntarily in certain child-related employment situations, or who conduct child-related businesses, to be screened through a Working with Children Check. The check undertaken by Blue Card Services is a detailed national check of a person’s criminal history and other records, including investigations, charges or convictions against that person. For further information see the [Policy – Requirements for Blue Cards or Exemption Cards](#).

### Criminal Code – Duty to Protect and Duty to Report

Section 229BC of the [Criminal Code 1899](#) imposes a duty on all adults receiving information about child sexual abuse to report that information to the police. Failure to report, subject to certain exceptions, carries a maximum penalty of 3 years imprisonment.

An example of an exception to the duty to report is if the adult receiving the information reasonably believes that the information has been reported to police by another person.

See the [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse in Ministry Units](#).

Section 229BB of the [Criminal Code 1899](#) imposes a duty to act in certain circumstances in relation to information about child sexual abuse. If a person associated with an institution:

1. knows there is a significant risk of another person associated with an institution committing child sexual abuse against a child under the care of an institution;
2. has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk; and
3. wilfully or negligently fails to reduce or remove that risk;

that person commits a crime, with a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment.

See the [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse in Ministry Units](#).

### **Child Protection Act**

The [Child Protection Act 1999](#) permits a Church worker, without liability, to report to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (Child Safety) if they reasonably suspect a child may have suffered or may be at risk of suffering significant harm (including, for the purposes of this Act, harm as a result of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation), and does not have a parent able and willing to protect them. See the [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse in Ministry Units](#) and the [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Signs of Harm in Ministry Units](#).

### **Civil Liability Act**

The [Civil Liability Act 2003](#) provides that institutions have a duty to take all reasonable steps to prevent the abuse of a child by a person associated with the institution, while the child is under the supervision, care, control or authority of the institution. If such abuse occurs, the institution has the onus of proving that it took reasonable steps to prevent its occurrence. This Policy complements other ACSQ policies to meet this duty.

### **Work Health and Safety Act**

The [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) provides a framework to assist in ensuring the health and safety of workers including by protecting workers (including volunteers) and other persons. This protection focuses on properly identifying and controlling risks which may impact the health, safety or welfare of workers and/or other persons. This is achieved by eliminating or minimising risks in the workplace.

For the purposes of the Act, a workplace is any place where work is carried out for a business or undertaking. This includes any place a Church worker attends or intends to attend in undertaking ministry work. For example, a ministry unit outdoor activity at a remote location is a workplace, and therefore subject to the requirements of the Act.

All Church workers have a duty to take reasonable care that their acts or omissions in a workplace do not adversely affect the health and safety of people, including children.

## 7: NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS

This Policy, together with other ACSQ safe ministry policies, assists the objective of acting consistently with the following [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#):

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

## 8: ACSQ POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Ministry leaders engaged in ministry to children, must be familiar with the following policies:

### **Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy**

The [Policy – Risk Management Strategy for Child and Youth Ministries in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland](#) (Strategy) provides an overarching framework for safe ministry practices within certain operational areas of ACSQ, and is a requirement of the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000](#). All ACSQ safe ministry policies support the Strategy.

### **Safe Ministry to Children Canon**

The [Safe Ministry to Children Canon](#) (SMCC) sets out requirements for all Church workers engaged in ministry to children, including behavioural expectations (see next paragraph on the Code), and screening and training requirements.

## Code of Conduct for Ministry to Children Within ACSQ

The [Code of Conduct for Ministry to Children Within the Anglican Church Southern Queensland](#) (Code) sets behavioural standards for all Church workers engaged in ministry to children, and all Church workers who have contact, or potential contact, with children. All such Church workers are required to comply with the Code. This Policy and its Procedures assist in meeting the expectations of the Code.

To the extent of any inconsistency between the Code and this Policy, the Code prevails. A breach of the Code by a Church worker may result in action being taken under the [Professional Standards Canon](#).

## Qualification and Credential Policy

The [Qualification and Credential Policy](#) sets out the screening and selection requirements for all Church workers in ACSQ, including safe ministry screening requirements. These safe ministry requirements include Blue Card requirements (see above under *Legal Requirements*), as well as Safe Ministry Questionnaire (also known as a Safe Ministry Check or Safe Ministry Assessment) and National Register Check requirements.

## Safe Ministry Check Manual

The *Safe Ministry Check Manual* provides guidance for ministry units to assist them in the selection of Church workers, particularly Church workers being engaged in child-related work. The manual includes Safe Ministry Questionnaires and recruitment and selection templates to help ensure only suitable persons are placed in child-related positions.

## Mandatory Child Protection Training

The [Policy – Mandatory Child Protection Training](#) requires all Church workers working directly with children to complete training in child protection at least once every three years.

## Professional Ethics Training

The [Policy – Professional Ethics Training for Ordinands, Licensed Persons and Certain Lay Church Workers](#) requires all licensed persons, as well as lay Church workers engaged in individual pastoral ministry, to attend training in professional ethics and human sexuality at least once every three years.

## Person of Concern Management

The [Policy for Safe Ministry in a parish where there is a risk of sexual abuse by a Person of Concern](#) (POC Policy) concerns the management of persons (primarily parishioners) in parishes who, subject to risk and situational assessments, are determined to pose a risk of committing sexual abuse against a child or other vulnerable person in a parish. Such persons are subject to Safety Agreements to manage identified risks.



## 9: POSITION REQUIRED IN PARISHES

### Safeguarders

1. All parishes must have at least one Safeguarder appointed by Parish Council.
2. Before commencing in the position, a Safeguarder must have a Blue Card or Exemption Card (see [Policy – Requirements for Blue Cards or Exemption Cards](#)).
3. Within three months of commencing, a Safeguarder must have completed all ACSQ screening and training requirements for a person engaged in ministry to children.
4. Safeguarders are to receive and respond to allegations of child sexual abuse or harm in a parish, including to allegations received directly from children.
5. The Parish Priest, in consultation with Parish Council, must establish and make known written processes for a child or adult to talk with a Safeguarder when they feel unsafe or uncomfortable or are concerned for another child's safety.
6. A Safeguarder who receives information about child sexual abuse is to act in accordance with the [Procedures and Information for Reporting and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse in Ministry Units](#) and is to provide support and assistance to the affected child.
7. A Safeguarder who receives information about harm to a child is to act in accordance with the [Procedures and Information for Reporting and Responding to Signs of Harm in Ministry Units](#) and is to provide support and assistance to the affected child.

## 10: OBLIGATIONS FOR CHURCH WORKERS

### All Church Workers, Including Leaders Must, Consistent with ACSQ Policies:

1. conduct themselves with professionalism and in accordance with their position;
2. behave at all times in a manner supportive of the safety and best interests of children, particularly when engaged in ministry to children;
3. contribute to a child safe environment in ACSQ by complying with this Policy and all related Procedures and Guidelines when engaged in ministry to children;
4. report child sexual abuse information in accordance with the [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse in Ministry Units](#);
5. report all harm or suspected harm in accordance with the [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Signs of Harm in Ministry Units](#); and
6. ensure that their behaviour does not encourage or support any behaviour by another person that is contrary to this Policy and its Procedures.

### Ministry Leaders Must Also, Consistent with ACSQ Policies:

7. prepare a risk management strategy for any child-related activity undertaken in their ministry unit;

8. ensure through sound recruitment and selection and screening practices, that suitable persons are chosen to work with children within their ministry units;
9. through training, build the knowledge and understanding of Church workers to help create a child safe environment; and
10. ensure that any person assessed to pose a risk to children, is managed to ensure any residual risk is acceptable.

### **Children (Where Age Appropriate) are Strongly Encouraged to:**

11. consider the rights and safety of others and act with respect towards their peers and Church workers;
12. act safely, including following reasonable directions and practices; and
13. talk to a Safeguarder or other person they trust, if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable, have been sexually abused or harmed, feel a person's behaviour towards them is inappropriate, or are concerned for another child's safety.

### **11: BEHAVIOURAL OBLIGATIONS**

To assist in fulfilling the special position of trust that they hold, all Church workers must not:

1. transport a child without the consent of a parent and without the prior knowledge and consent of their supervisor/manager;
2. visit a child, or seek to visit a child at their home, without the consent of a parent and without the prior knowledge and consent of their supervisor/manager;
3. invite a child to their home unaccompanied, without the consent of a parent and without the prior knowledge and consent of their supervisor/manager;
4. send communications of an inappropriate nature to a child;
5. send or receive inappropriate gifts to or from a child;
6. display physical or emotional aggression towards a child, including violence or bullying;
7. engage in sexual exhibitionism or voyeurism towards a child;
8. take photographs or create images of a child without the prior permission of the child (where the child is at least 17 years of age and mature enough to make such decisions) or the child's parents/guardians;
9. develop an intimate relationship with a child, regardless of who initiates the contact;
10. expose a child to pornographic material in any medium;
11. have inappropriate discussions with a child concerning sexual matters or behaviour;

12. use obscene language in the presence of a child, particularly language of a sexual nature;
13. make gestures or actions of a suggestive or obscene nature in the presence of a child;
14. tell jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of a child;
15. seek to be alone with a child unless in accordance with the [Procedure and Information for Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children in Ministry Units](#); or
16. detain a child in a locked facility unless there is an emergency situation.

**Remember: Failure by a child to reject inappropriate behaviour never implies consent.**

## 12: KEEPING CHILDREN INFORMED – PROTECTIVE INSTRUCTION

**12.1:** Consistent with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, children participating in activities within, or otherwise connected with, ministry units are to be informed of their rights and responsibilities in an age appropriate manner.

**12.2:** The information provided to children is to help ensure they understand the meaning and importance of child safety and wellbeing. Where appropriate, children should be encouraged to participate in building an environment that promotes child safety.

**12.3:** All Church workers must value and respect the identity and perspectives of children. This includes understanding the developmental needs of children, and assisting children to build on their strengths and capacities.

See [Guidelines for Engaging with Children, Families and Communities](#) for further details.

## 13: PASTORAL AND COUNSELLING SUPPORT

**13.1:** ACSQ is committed to providing pastoral support and counselling support for all person affected by child sexual abuse or harm, as set out under the [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse in Ministry Units](#) and the [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Signs of Harm in Ministry Units](#).

**13.2:** Where there is information about child sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a Church worker, pastoral and counselling support is to be offered in accordance with the [Protocol for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct](#). In all other instances, support will be offered which is consistent with the principles underpinning the assistance offered in the Protocol.

## 14: REPORTING INFORMATION ABOUT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND HARM

**14.1:** All information about child sexual abuse must be reported in accordance with the [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse in Ministry Units](#) and, if concerning a Church worker, the [Protocol for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct](#).

**14.2:** All information about harm (or suspected harm) must be reported in accordance with the [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Signs of Harm in Ministry Units](#).

## **15: REPORTING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AGAINST ADULTS**

Church workers must report any sexual misconduct by Church workers in accordance with the [Protocol for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct](#).

## **16: COMPLAINTS / BREACH OF PROCESS**

In the event that any person, whether they be a Church worker or otherwise, has a concern that the processes within this Policy and its Procedures have not been complied with, that person may make a complaint to the Office of Professional Standards. The Office of Professional Standards will investigate the alleged breach in accordance with any relevant Canons, policies or employment law.

## **17: INCONSISTENCY WITH THE LAW OR EXTERNAL POLICY**

**17.1:** If a Church worker, by reason of their role or position, is subject to both this Policy, the law and/or an external policy, they are to comply with this Policy, the law and the external policy to the extent that they are consistent. For example, if you are a hospital chaplain, circumstances may require reports of harm to be made in accordance with:

- i. the [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Signs of Harm in Ministry Units](#);
- ii. the policy of the relevant hospital; and
- iii. as required under the [Child Protection Act 1999](#).

**17.2:** To the extent of any inconsistency between this Policy, the law and/or an external policy mentioned in clause 17.1, the following is to apply:

- A. all statutory requirements must be followed, regardless of any inconsistency with this Policy or its Procedures;
- B. subject to clause C, if the external policy is based on a statute (for instance, a hospital policy), then the external policy is to prevail to the extent of any inconsistency with this Policy or its Procedures;
- C. reports are to be made in accordance with this Policy and its Procedures if there is an allegation of child sexual abuse, harm to a child, or sexual misconduct by a Church worker unless the Church worker is directed by an external government agency (such as the Queensland Police Service) not to report the information;
- D. if clauses A and B do not apply, this Policy is to be followed.

## **18: COMMENCEMENT DATE**

This Policy and its Procedures commenced on 5 July 2021.

|                    |                          |  |                          |                               |                          |                               |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Applies To:        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Anglican Schools Commission                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> | Diocesan Services Commission  |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Episcopate & Leadership                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Financial Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ministry Education Commission |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parishes & Other Mission Agencies Commission |                          |                               |                          |                               |
| Related Documents: | <input type="checkbox"/> | Procedure                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Form                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other                         |

This Procedure sets out what Church workers must do when they receive information concerning child sexual abuse. There is also detailed information to assist those who receive, or may in the future receive, information about child sexual abuse of a child.

For actions to be taken when responding to harm to a child, see the [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Signs of Harm in Ministry Units](#).

For the definition of key terms used in this Procedure, see the [Policy for the Protection of Children in Ministry Units](#).

## 1. ACTIONS TO TAKE IF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE INFORMATION RECEIVED

**1.1:** All Church workers must, in accordance with this Procedure, report allegations or information received in relation to child sexual abuse, whether such abuse is historical or current (see clause 2 for recognising signs of child sexual abuse). In making such a report, Church workers must consider each of clauses 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4.

**1.2:** A Church worker must, as soon as reasonably practicable, report all allegations or information received concerning child sexual abuse by a Church worker to the Office of Professional Standards in accordance with the requirements of the [Protocol for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct](#).

**1.3:** Any Church worker who receives allegations or information in relation to child sexual abuse by a person who is not a Church worker, must report that allegation or information as soon as reasonably practicable to the Office of Professional Standards.

**[Note:** Reports to the Office of Professional Standards can be made by phone (1800 242 544) or email ([professionalstandards@anglicanchurchsq.org.au](mailto:professionalstandards@anglicanchurchsq.org.au)). The form, [Report of Known or Suspected Child Sexual Abuse or Harm to a Child](#) may be used for reports.]

**1.4:** Under s 229BC of the [Criminal Code 1899](#), criminal penalties may apply to any Church worker who, without reasonable excuse, fails to report to police any reasonable belief that a child sexual offence has been or is being committed. For further information, see Appendix A to this Procedure, which sets out s 229BC in full.

**[Note:** Reports to police may be done by either contacting your local police station or by contacting Policelink at 131 444. Reports to police may also be done online.]

**1.5:** For the purposes of clause 1.4, a **reasonable belief** means that an adult gains information that causes the adult to believe on reasonable grounds, or ought reasonably to cause the adult to believe, that child sexual abuse is being or has been committed against a child by another adult.

**1.6:** Subject to clause 1.8, it is for a Church worker to decide whether they must not only report to the Office of Professional Standards under clause 1.2 or 1.3, but also report to the police directly under clause 1.4 (on the basis of holding a reasonable belief).

**1.7:** If a Church worker receives information concerning child sexual abuse, but is unsure whether the information received should cause them to have a reasonable belief that child sexual abuse has occurred, the Church worker may contact the Office of Professional Standards to discuss before deciding whether to make a report to the police.

**1.8:** The Office of Professional Standards must respond to any allegations or information received under clauses 1.2 and 1.3 in accordance with the requirements of the [Protocol for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct](#), including making any required reports to police in accordance with Appendix E of the Protocol.

## 2. IDENTIFYING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

**2.1:** As a Church worker, you may while carrying out your duties observe one or more warning signs which may indicate that a child has been sexually abused. Examples include:

- a. Unexplained changes in behaviour, such as a child becoming excessively aggressive, withdrawn or clingy, especially when contrasting to previous behaviour;
- b. Observed difficulties sleeping, including having regular nightmares or wetting the bed;
- c. Avoidance or expressed dislike for or fear of a particular person, and an observed tendency to avoid spending time with the person without clear justification;
- d. Use of sexually explicit language or behaving in sexually inappropriate ways;
- e. Health problems such as soreness or itching in genital or anal regions; or
- f. Indirect (or direct) verbal disclosures relating to the abuse (see further below).

**2.2:** Such warning signs are not always easy to see, and what you see may reflect other issues. Nevertheless, if you are concerned that a child is being or may be sexually abused, or has been sexually abused, you must report those concerns as set out in this Procedure.

**2.3:** Remember, due to the inherent imbalance of power, children are incapable of giving consent to child sexual abuse. Such abuse occurs due to an adult or older child's authority and/or power over the child. Any form of child sexual abuse, regardless of the context and circumstances, is always a crime.

## 3. RESPONDING TO CHILDREN WHO DISCLOSE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

**3.1:** Children often do not talk about sexual abuse because they think it is their fault or they have been convinced by their abuser that it is normal or a "special secret". Children may also be bribed or threatened by their abuser or told they will not be believed.

**3.2:** In some instances, a child who is being sexually abused may care for their abuser and worry about getting them into trouble, especially when abuse is occurring within a family.

**3.3:** Disclosures to Church workers may be about child sexual abuse which is happening in the present, or child sexual abuse which has happened in the past. Sometimes a disclosure may be about a person's fear that a child will be at risk of sexual abuse in the future.

**3.4:** As disclosures made by children may not be clear, it is important for Church workers to be aware of what an indirect disclosure may sound like. Examples include:

- a. Vague Disclosure: "I don't like my babysitter because he always want to play with me when I'm trying to sleep."
- b. Disguised Disclosure: "I know someone who was touched in a bad way." OR "What if a girl tells her mother her uncle touched her breast but she didn't believe her."
- c. Conditional Disclosure: "I have a problem, but if I tell you about it you have to promise not tell anyone else." OR "Can I tell you a secret?"

**3.5:** If a child discloses child sexual abuse, it will likely be unsettling and difficult to deal with. The child may approach you because you are known to them and they believe you are able to help them. It is a sign of trust that a child would tell you something so personal.

**3.6: Remember, a child will tell you about the abuse because they want it to stop.** This is true even if they also tell you not to tell anyone else about the child sexual abuse.

**3.7:** When responding to a child's verbal disclosure of child sexual abuse you **MUST:**

- a. stay calm and listen carefully to the child's disclosure;
- b. allow the child to continue at their own pace;
- c. reassure the child that they have done the right thing;
- d. reassure the child that they are not to blame for the child sexual abuse;
- e. tell the child that you will do what you can to help;
- f. let the child know that you will be reporting the child sexual abuse;
- g. report the child sexual abuse in accordance with this Procedure.

**3.8:** When responding to a verbal disclosure of child sexual abuse you **MUST NOT:**

- a. panic or dismiss the child's concerns;
- b. request more information than you need to report the child sexual abuse;
- c. promise not to tell anyone or that you will keep it a secret;
- d. make openly negative comments about the accused person;
- e. make assumptions or speculate as to the specifics of the child sexual abuse;
- f. disclose details to anyone except persons to whom you are required to report;
- g. under any circumstances, inform the person who is the alleged offender.

**3.9:** If a child indicates that they do not want state authorities to be informed of the child sexual abuse, you should gently explain that you are obliged to report the abuse by law.

#### 4. GROOMING IS A FORM OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

**4.1:** Grooming is the manipulative cultivation of a relationship, either with a child or with the child's parents/guardians or other responsible adults (including Church workers) in order to:

- A. initiate or hide sexual abuse of a child;
- B. facilitate the procurement of a child to engage in a sexual act; or
- C. expose, without legitimate reason, a child to any indecent matter.

**4.2:** Under the [Criminal Code 1899](#) s 218B, the grooming of a child under 16 (or their parent or carer) is a crime punishable by penalties including imprisonment.

**4.3:** Grooming is a form of child sexual abuse. It may involve an adult or another child using their power, influence or authority to gradually involve a child in sexual activity. Grooming often starts with something minor and gradually builds up to more sexualised behaviour.

**4.4:** Grooming is secretive, and often known only to the abuser and the victim. This can make it extremely difficult to detect. It aims to establish an emotional connection to lower a child's inhibitions through development of a close relationship with the child, or those close to the child such as a parent or guardian. This creates increased opportunities for the abuser to see the child and, consequently, for further abuse to occur.

**4.5:** Grooming can involve psychological manipulation that is usually subtle, drawn-out, calculated, controlling and premediated. It typically occurs incrementally, starting with accessing the child and then initiating and maintaining the abuse. Afterwards, grooming acts to conceal the ongoing abuse, particularly where a child's family have been groomed.

**4.6:** Child sexual abuse is often perpetrated by someone known to the child or who is held in a position of trust by the child or their parents/guardians. It is rarely self-contained or a one-off incident, but rather part of an ongoing abusive relationship.

#### 5. THE DAMAGING IMPACTS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

**5.1:** Child sexual abuse is highly damaging to children, and often has significant impacts on their psychological, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. It can lead to long-term impairment of a child's social, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and intellectual development, as well as the development of disturbed behaviour that can often last long term unless help is sought.

**5.2:** The effects of child sexual abuse can extend well beyond the victim child. The child's family members, and other members of their community often experience a high degree of distress when revelation of child sexual abuse emerges. The family of the offender is also often negatively impacted by such abuse.

**5.3:** Some people may wrongly deny the disclosure, rejecting what the victim is disclosing rather than face the responsibility to report the abuse and intervene if the situation is urgent.



### 6. CHARACTERISTICS OF SEXUAL OFFENDERS

Church workers should be aware that, in general, child sex offenders:

- a. do not stop the abuse unless there is some intervening factor forcing them to do so;
- b. frequently believe or assert that the victim is a complicit or willing participant;
- c. will attempt to deny, justify, minimise or excuse their behaviour by claiming it was an expression of love for the victim, was a result of their own child abuse, was the fault of the victim, or was influenced by factors such as stress, alcohol or substance abuse;
- d. enjoy engaging in the abuse, regardless of claims they make to the contrary; and
- e. are frequently repeat offenders, whether against the same child or multiple children.

### 7. PROVISION OF PASTORAL SUPPORT

**7.1:** It is important that throughout any process involving the identification and reporting of child sexual abuse that pastoral support and, where relevant, counselling assistance is provided to all persons affected by the abuse and the reporting of the abuse. This will include the child and their family, as well as any Church worker who receives a verbal disclosure of child sexual abuse or otherwise becomes aware of such abuse.

**7.2:** Where the information relates to child sexual abuse by a Church worker, support will be offered in accordance with the [Protocol for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct](#). In all other instances, support offered is consistent with assistance offered under the Protocol.

## APPENDIX A

### Criminal Code Failure to Report Offence

#### ***229BC – Failure to report belief of child sexual offence committed in relation to child***

(1) This section applies to an adult if:

- a. the adult gains information that causes the adult to believe on reasonable grounds, or ought reasonably to cause the adult to believe, that a child sexual offence is being or has been committed against a child by another adult; and
- b. at the relevant time, the child is or was:
  - i. under 16 years; or
  - ii. a person with an impairment of the mind.

- (2) If, without reasonable excuse, the adult fails to disclose the information to a police officer as soon as reasonably practicable after the belief is, or ought reasonably to have been, formed, the adult commits a misdemeanour.

Maximum penalty – 3 years imprisonment.

- (3) For subsection (1), it does not matter that the information was gained by the adult during, or in connection with, a religious confession.

- (4) Without limiting what may be a reasonable excuse for subsection (2), an adult has a reasonable excuse if:

a. the adult believes on reasonable grounds that the information has already been disclosed to a police officer; or

b. the adult has already reported the information under any of the following provisions, or believes on reasonable grounds that another person has done or will do so:

i. the *Child Protection Act 1999*, chapter 2, part 1AA;

ii. the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, chapter 12, part 10;

iii. the *Youth Justice Act 1992*, part 8 or 9; or

c. the adult gains the information after the child becomes an adult (the alleged victim), and the adult reasonably believes the alleged victim does not want the information to be disclosed to a police officer; or

d. both of the following apply:

i. the adult reasonable believes disclosing the information to a police officer would endanger the safety of the adult or another person, other than the alleged offender, regardless of whether the belief arises because of the fact of the disclosure or the information disclosed;

ii. failure to disclose the information to a police officer is a reasonable response in the circumstances.

- (5) An adult who, in good faith, discloses information mentioned in subsection (1)(a) to a police officer is not liable civilly, criminally or under an administrative process for making the disclosure.

- (6) In this section:

**relevant time**, in relation to the child sexual offence mentioned in subsection (1)(a), means the time that the adult:

a. believes to be the time of commission of the offence; or

b. ought reasonably to believe to be the time of commission of the offence.

|                    |   |  |  |
|--------------------|---|--|--|
| Applies To:        | <input type="checkbox"/> Anglican Schools Commission                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> Diocesan Services Commission  |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Episcopate & Leadership                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry Education Commission |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Parishes & Other Mission Agencies Commission |  |  |
| Related Documents: | <input type="checkbox"/> Procedure                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Form                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                         |

This Procedure concerns responding to harm to children, or to signs of harm. Any Church workers responding to child sexual abuse should refer to the [Procedure and Information for Reporting and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse in Ministry Units](#) and, if the alleged offender is a Church worker, the [Protocol for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct](#).

For the definition of key terms used in this Procedure, see the [Policy for the Protection of Children in Ministry Units](#).

## 1. REPORTING HARM TO STATE AUTHORITIES

**1.1:** Church workers with information which leads them to form a reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed (see clauses 3, 5 and 6 for recognising signs of harm) must:

- a. advise their supervisor or manager (for parishes, this is the Parish Priest or Safeguarder) of their reasonable suspicion; and
- b. unless a parent or guardian of the child has already contacted state authorities, assist their supervisor/manager to report the harm to the Department of Child Safety.

Specific contact details for Child Safety vary depending on the geographical location of the alleged harm. Contact details are on the [Department of Child Safety](#) website.

**1.2:** The supervisor/manager has the responsibility to report to Child Safety.

**1.3:** If you have any concerns about whether a report should be made, you may contact the Office of Professional Standards for further advice at 1800 242 544 or [professionalstandards@anglicanchurchsq.org.au](mailto:professionalstandards@anglicanchurchsq.org.au).

**1.4:** Unless the circumstances outlined in clause 1.6 apply, a Church worker satisfies their reporting obligations by reporting the relevant harm to their supervisor or manager.

**1.5:** If the person suspected to have caused the harm is a Church worker, the harm must be reported by the supervisor/manager to the Office of Professional Standards.

**1.6:** A Church worker must report directly to the Office of Professional Standards if their supervisor or manager is the subject of the allegations.

**1.8:** The attached form, [Report of Known or Suspected Child Sexual Abuse or Harm to a Child](#) is to be used when making reports under this Procedure.

**1.9:** If a child indicates that they do not want state authorities to be informed of the harm, the reporting Church worker is to gently explain that they are obliged to report the harm.

### 2. RESPONDING TO VERBAL DISCLOSURES OF HARM

**2.1:** When responding to a verbal disclosure from a child, a Church worker must:

- a. stay calm and listen carefully to the child's disclosure;
- b. allow the child to continue at their own pace;
- c. reassure the child that they have done the right thing;
- d. reassure the child that they are not to blame for the harm;
- e. tell the child that you will help;
- f. let the child know that you will be reporting the harm; and
- g. report the harm in accordance with the directions set out above.

**2.2:** When responding to a verbal disclosure from a child, a Church worker must **not**:

- a. panic or dismiss the child's concerns;
- b. request more information from the child than you need to report the harm;
- c. promise not to tell anyone or that you will keep it a secret;
- d. make openly negative comments about the accused person;
- e. make assumptions or speculate as to the specifics of the harm;
- f. disclose details to anyone except persons to whom you are required to report; or
- g. under any circumstances, inform the person who is the alleged offender.

### 3. RECOGNISING VERBAL DISCLOSURES OF HARM

**3.1:** A child, or a person connected to a child, may disclose harm to a Church worker. The disclosure may be about harm happening now, in the past or which is suspected will happen in the future. The child might make the disclosure, or it may be made by someone with knowledge of a child being harmed.

**3.2:** Sometimes a disclosure is about a person's fear that a child is at risk of harm.

**3.3:** As disclosures made by children are often not stated outright or directly, it is important for Church workers to be aware of what an indirect disclosure may sound like. For example:

- a. Vague Disclosure: "I don't like being left alone with my new babysitter."
- b. Disguised Disclosure: "I know someone who has been hurt." OR "What would happen if a girl told her mother that her father had hit her but the mother didn't believe her."
- c. Conditional Disclosure: "I have a problem, but if I tell you about it you have to promise not to tell anyone else." OR "Can I tell you a secret?"

**3.4:** If a child discloses harm to you, it will likely be unsettling and difficult. The child may approach you because they believe you may be able to help them. It is also a sign of trust that a child would tell you something so personal.

**3.5: Remember, a child will tell you about harm because they want it to stop.** This is true, even if they also tell you not to tell anyone else about the harm.

**3.6:** You must always take a child's disclosure of harm seriously and take action to report and respond to that harm. Remember, we all have a responsibility to keep children safe and to protect them from harm.

#### 4. RESPONDING TO PHYSICAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS OF HARM

As a Church worker, if you identify physical or behavioural signs of harm to a child you must:

- a. if you are able to do so without risking further harm to the child, gently ask the child how they got the observed injury, or what has caused the noted behavioural change. This is to be done using opened ended questions such as *“Who did this to you?”*. Avoid questions which suggest the answer such as *“Did Mr X do this to you?”*.
- b. if the child’s explanation raises concerns (or if you are unable to question the child in accordance with clause 4.1(a)), discuss your concerns with your supervisor/manager (for parishes, this is the Parish Priest);
- c. if you are uncertain whether the child has been harmed, and if you are able to do so without risking further harm to the child, without making any inappropriate physical contact, continue to observe the child for further signs of harm, though only after informing your supervisor/manager of your intent;
- d. if you believe the child has not been harmed, but is upset, offer support to the child;
- e. if you have a reasonable suspicion that the child has been harmed, report that harm in accordance with clause 1 of this Procedure.

#### 5. RECOGNISING PHYSICAL SIGNS OF HARM

**5.1:** Often there is a reasonable explanation for physical injuries. While care must be provided to an injured child, there may be no immediate reason to suspect the injury is caused by neglect or abuse. However, in some instances there may be no reasonable explanation or cause provided, and this may be a sign that the child has been harmed.

**5.2:** Physical signs of harm include:

- a. direct physical injuries consistent with abusive behaviour, such as bruises or welts, broken bones, burns or scalds, bites, cuts, marks on the neck and damage to teeth;
- b. signs of neglect, such as poor personal hygiene, poor muscle tone, being severely underweight or overweight compared to children of the same age;
- c. young children showing significant physical developmental delays;
- d. untreated physical or medical conditions, as well as constant hunger or tiredness; and
- e. frequently inadequate or inappropriate clothing for weather and a consistent lack of parental supervision during observed activities.

### 6. RECOGNISING BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS OF HARM

**6.1:** Where a Church worker has contact with a child over time, they may notice changes in the child's behaviour that may indicate the child is being harmed.

**6.2:** Behavioural signs of harm can be difficult to identify but may include:

- a. truancy or habitual lateness to scheduled activities, and general underachieving;
- b. expressed feelings of worthlessness about life, poor self-image and low self-esteem;
- c. indications of anxiety or depression, as well as self-harm and suicidal thoughts;
- d. apathetic behaviour, including a lack of interest in forming interpersonal connections;
- e. an apparent lack of trust in others, particularly where this was not previously an issue;
- f. overly compliant or passive behaviour, including excessive submission to authority;
- g. extremely demanding, aggressive or attention-seeking behaviour;
- h. anti-social or destructive behaviour, including compulsive lying or stealing;
- i. the sudden onset of soiling, wetting or similar behavioural changes; and
- j. regressive behaviour, such as baby talk or thumb sucking.

**6.3:** The behaviour of a child's parent/guardian may also be a sign a child is being harmed. For example, if the parent/guardian constantly criticises, threatens, belittles, insults or rejects the child, particularly if this is done in a public setting.

### 7. THE DAMAGING IMPACTS OF HARM ON A CHILD

**7.1:** Harm to a child commonly causes them to experience psychological and spiritual damage, and without intervention, will likely lead to the long-term impairment of their social, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and intellectual development and/or to disordered behaviour.

**7.2:** The effects of such harm can extend well beyond the offender and the victim child. Families of the victim, as well as their communities, can also experience a high degree of distress when revelations of harm emerge.

**7.3:** The family of the offender may experience similar issues.

**7.4:** Within the victim's family or community, some may deny the disclosure and reject the victim rather than face the reality of the offending. Once the reality is confronted, members of the community will often experience profound shock, guilt and disillusionment.

## 8. AWARENESS OF RISK FACTORS FOR HARM

**8.1:** In addition to recognising signs of harm, Church workers must also be aware of the risk factors that may lead to a Church worker, or another person, harming a child. When a child is harmed, the person causing the harm is often someone that the child knows in their own home or community, rather than a stranger. Unfortunately, it is often a family member.

**8.2:** The causes of harm are often complex. There is likely no single or simple explanation, but Church workers are to be aware of, and able to identify, the following signs that are known to contribute to the risk of a person causing harm to a child.

- a. stress, including poverty and financial stress;
- b. a lack of interpersonal support and/or a sense of isolation;
- c. drug and alcohol abuse and/or gambling problems;
- d. poor childhood experiences, potentially including childhood abuse;
- e. a living environment including domestic/family violence; and
- f. unrealistic expectations of children and their behaviour.

**8.3:** Church workers must be aware that, given certain circumstances such as the consumption of alcohol or mind-altering drugs, or instances of poor psychological health, anyone, including a Church worker, has the potential to harm a child.

**8.4:** Harm may be caused to a child by a Church worker where stress, tiredness and lack of information and support combine to make the pressures of caring for a child overwhelming.

**8.5: However, always remember that nothing excuses conduct that causes harm to a child,** and any such harmful conduct must be reported as set out under clause 1, regardless of the circumstances that lead to the harm.

## 9. SEEKING ASSISTANCE

**9.1:** Deciding what to do when you have a concern for a child is not easy, and reporting harm is a difficult, challenging, but very important task. This is why it is important to discuss any concerns or suspicions of harm you may have with your supervisor or manager, so that they may assist you in determining what further action should be taken.

**9.2:** If at any time you are unsure how to proceed, you may also contact the Office of Professional Standards for advice and support by phone at 1800 242 544, or by email at [professionalstandards@anglicanchurchsq.org.au](mailto:professionalstandards@anglicanchurchsq.org.au).

**9.3:** All queries to the Office of Professional Standards will be taken seriously, and no adverse action will be taken against a Church worker for raising concerns.

**9.3:** The safety and wellbeing of children is everyone's business, and you do not have to feel that you are solely responsible. By sharing your concerns with the right people, you not only allow others to assist in meeting this responsibility, but also help to ensure that appropriate action is taken.

### 10. PROVISION OF PASTORAL SUPPORT AND COUNSELLING ASSISTANCE

**10.1:** It is important that, throughout any process involving the identification and reporting of harm, pastoral support and, where applicable, counselling assistance are provided to all persons affected. This will include the child and their family, as well as any Church worker who receives a verbal disclosure of harm or otherwise becomes aware of such harm.

**10.2:** Parishes and other ministry units may seek advice from the Office of Professional Standards regarding pastoral support and counselling assistance.

**10.3:** Any Church worker responding to a sign of harm should also exercise self-care. This includes seeking advice and, where needed, seeking pastoral support and/or counselling to assist you in dealing with the harm to which you have been exposed. You may speak with your supervisor/manager regarding such support.



|                    |                          |  |                          |                               |                          |                               |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Applies To:        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Anglican Schools Commission                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> | Diocesan Services Commission  |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Episcopate & Leadership                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Financial Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ministry Education Commission |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parishes & Other Mission Agencies Commission |                          |                               |                          |                               |
| Related Documents: | <input type="checkbox"/> | Procedure                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Form                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other                         |

All ministry leaders and Church workers have a responsibility to take reasonable steps to provide a safe environment for children in the care of the ministry unit. The following procedures and information are to assist Church workers to meet this responsibility.

For the definition of key terms used in this Procedure and its associated Guidelines, see the [Policy for the Protection of Children in Ministry Units](#).

**Note:** When planning a child-related activity, it is important to read this Procedure and the accompanying information. Child safety measures often need to be understood as a whole to help make children safe. Further, this Procedure and information should be read together with the following Guidelines:

- [Guidelines for Engaging with Children, Families and Communities](#)
- [Guidelines for Outdoor Activities with Children](#)
- [Guidelines for Use of Digital Mediums with Children](#)
- [Guidelines for Transporting Children](#)
- [Guidelines on Children and Appropriate Touch](#)

## 1. Duty of Care When Working with Children

**1.1:** All Church workers who have responsibility for children have a duty of care in relation to the safety and wellbeing of those children. A Church worker with responsibility for a child retains that responsibility even if care is undertaken by an external service provider.

**1.2:** All Church workers have a duty to identify any risks associated with a child-related activity in which they are involved, and to take reasonable steps to reduce any risks to a level that is low or nil.

**1.3:** Failure to protect a child is a criminal offence under s 229BB of the *Criminal Code* and is punishable by up to five years imprisonment. See Appendix A for the full text of s 229BB.

### 2. Develop a Risk Management Plan

**2.1:** Risk management plans must be prepared by those responsible for any child-related activity. Such plans help ensure that all reasonable steps are taken for improving the safety and wellbeing of children engaged in child-related activities.

**2.2:** A risk management plan must include the following:

- a. screening and selection of personnel, including any external service providers, in accordance with ACSQ safe ministry guidelines;
- b. a role description for each position;
- c. details of the capacity of Church workers to meet the position responsibilities;
- d. decisions and actions to be taken to ensure effective supervision of children and Church workers during the activity; and
- e. plans for responding to any emergencies.

**2.3:** In terms of operational matters, the risk management plan must:

- a. record the steps which have already been taken, and/or are to be taken, to plan and conduct the relevant activity before it occurs;
- b. identify a suitable venue for the activity and any risks involved with that venue;
- c. identify and assess any transport, and health and safety requirements;
- d. assess the capacity of children to be involved in the activity e.g. any health limitations;
- e. provide directions to relevant Church workers on acceptable discipline of children;
- f. set clear and consistent limits regarding physical contact with children; and
- g. clearly state requirements to be met before photographs can be taken of children.

### 3. Screen Prospective Church Workers When Selecting Persons

**3.1:** All screening practices must comply with ACSQ safe ministry policies, procedures and guidelines, and in particular the [Qualification and Credential Policy](#), [Qualifications and Credentials Requirements for Parish Positions](#), [Policy – Mandatory Child Protection Training](#) and [Safe Ministry Check Manual](#). The below is provided as additional guidance.

**3.2:** Ministry leaders must exercise particular care with the selection of any Church worker involved in activities for children. This will include screening any parents or guardians assisting with such activities.

**3.3:** If a ministry leader engages or uses an external service provider for an activity (e.g. an outdoor activity specialist), the ministry leader must make reasonable enquires concerning whether the service provider has been appropriately screened in accordance with statutory and ACSQ requirements. Further, the role of such persons is to supplement the roles of others. External service providers are not to have overall leadership responsibility in any child-related activity. As far as practical, external service providers are not to be left alone with any child during any child-related activity.

**3.4:** All screening records, whether paper or electronic, are confidential and are only to be accessed by authorised persons. Electronic records must be password protected. Paper records are to be stored separately from other documents and locked in a secure place.

## 4. Potential Limits on the Participation of Persons

**4.1:** The Office of Professional Standards must be consulted in relation to any person seeking to be involved in activities involving children, where the relevant person:

- a. has been charged with an offence against a child (even if they were acquitted of the offence or the charge was not proceeded with);
- b. has previously had their right to work with children revoked by a state authority (even if their right to work was later reinstated by that state authority);
- c. is in a process whereby the person is subject to disciplinary or fitness for office proceedings for child sexual abuse, harm to a child or adult sexual misconduct;
- d. has disclosed concerning information in the course of their safe ministry screening; or
- e. has otherwise engaged in conduct that raises concerns regarding their suitability to work with children.

All such persons will be assessed by the Office of Professional Standards and Diocesan Advisor in accordance with the [Policy for Safe Ministry in a parish where there is a risk of sexual abuse by a Person of Concern](#) (*Person of Concern Policy*).

**4.2:** Any person who has previously been convicted, disciplined or in some way found to have committed child sexual abuse is not to hold any position working with children unless assessed not to be a person of concern under the [Person of Concern Policy](#).

## 5. Assess the Capacity of Church Workers to Undertake a Role

**5.1:** Ministry leaders must assess the capacity of persons selected for child-related activities to ensure that they:

- a. only undertake activities that are within their level of competence or accreditation; and
- b. only undertake roles for which they have appropriate experience and/or training.

**5.2:** Church workers must recognise their own limitations and must not:

- a. seek to undertake activities that are beyond their level of competence or outside of the scope of their professional accreditation; or
- b. otherwise seek to undertake a role which is not a role for which they are trained.

**5.3:** Children are placed at greater risk if Church workers responsible for their safety and wellbeing lack the capacity to fully meet that responsibility.

**5.4:** Where Church workers with experience/expertise are not available, specialist agencies may be used for such activities. This will apply particularly to outdoor or adventure activities (see [Guidelines for Outdoor Activities with Children](#)).

**5.5:** If any child requires specialised help (e.g. counselling for depression, abuse or addiction), the child must be referred to an appropriately qualified person or agency.

### 6. Be Familiar With the Venue and Premises

**6.1:** Church workers are not to work alone or in isolation with children.

**6.2:** When selecting a venue, ensure that the activity area has defined boundaries that are easily observed or patrolled, and that all aspects of the activity are open to observation.

**6.3:** Familiarise yourself with potential hazards at the venue. Any such hazards are to be recorded and managed through the risk management plan (see clause 2), to ensure that any identified risks associated with a hazard are managed, and that the residual risk is low.

**6.4:** The activity leader must be aware of the location of medical services in the area, as well as the availability of emergency services including police, local fire services and ambulance. This information must be available and known to all Church workers involved in an activity, as well as any other adults present.

[**Note:** See also clause 13 regarding the importance of visibility.]

### 7. Supervision of Children

**7.1:** It is vitally important that more than one adult Church worker is present at any children's activity to ensure both adequate supervision and supervisor accountability.

**7.2:** The degree of supervision for the children in an activity must be carefully measured by Church workers responsible for the activity, and must take into account:

- a. the age, number, ability and gender mix of the children involved; and
- b. the venue, time duration and nature of the activity.

**7.3:** As far as practical, there must be a gender balance of Church workers except where the activity involves, or primarily involves, children of one gender (in which case Church workers are to be of the same gender).

**7.4:** Excepting in an emergency, children are not permitted to leave the premises of any child-related activity unless supervised by a Church worker (noting Church workers are not to be alone with children) or by a parent or guardian of that child. Similarly, except in an emergency, a child is not to travel to and from an activity alone.

**7.5:** Church workers are to take steps to avoid a child becoming dependent on them. This is in the context that a child can trust and confide in Church workers, but should also be encouraged, at age-appropriate times, to develop leadership skills and strive to become more independent.

### 8. Supervision During Overnight Activities

**8.1:** If an activity involves children under the age of 13 in an overnight stay, parents or guardians are to be included in the supervision arrangements.

**8.2:** Sleeping arrangements must be segregated between males and females. Each group must be supervised by more than one adult. One of the adults must be a parent/guardian of an attending child. There must be a parent as well as a Church worker of different genders.

**8.3:** Church workers are not to sleep in close proximity to a child during an overnight stay, unless they are also the parent or guardian of the child.

### 9. One-on-One Meetings with Children

**9.1:** Church workers must not, out of sight of others, engage in potentially compromising situations with children, such as one-on-one pastoral care/counselling or similar situations.

**9.2:** If there is a compelling need to hold a discussion with a child in a closed room, this is to be done only if:

- a. there are glass panels or windows that allow full visibility into the room for satisfactory observation by another responsible adult. That adult must have been advised of the meeting and be nearby at all times during the meeting; and
- b. if at all possible, parental or guardian consent to the meeting is obtained.

**9.3:** Church workers must at no time invite a child to visit their home, or to visit any other location to meet, unless there is direct supervision by a parent or guardian of the child.

**9.4:** If a Church worker intends to visit a child who is under the direct supervision of the parent or guardian, on more than two occasions in any one year, written approval from the Church worker's supervisor/manager must be obtained.

### 10. Working with Children with Disabilities

**10.1:** If a child has a disability, you must be aware of how this may affect their participation in the activity. Activity leaders may need to take reasonable steps to ensure that the child's needs are met, so that any risk is reduced to low or nil. This may require seeking expert advice from a qualified person.

**10.2:** Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that child-related activities are accessible for children with physical disabilities. Activities that a child with physical disabilities cannot safely participate in should be kept to an absolute minimum.

**10.3:** If a child has a neurological disability (e.g. ADHD, Asperger's), at least one Church worker present must be familiar with working with children with such disabilities. A parent or guardian is to accompany any child who has a severe neurological disability.

### 11. Completion of Safety-Related Forms and Keeping of Records

**11.1:** Before undertaking any activity involving children, Church workers must ensure that a [Consent and Medical Information for Child-Related Activities Form](#) has been completed for each child attending the activity.

**11.2:** A register of attending children must be kept and available during all group activities. In addition to recording attendance or non-attendance, the register must record up-to-date contact details for parents/guardians and note any medical information that may affect the child's participation in the activity.

**11.3:** If children are to be taken off-site, a detailed program, list of attendees and list of contact persons must be left with Church workers who remain on-site. All contact details are to be kept on a strictly needs-to-know basis. Parents/guardians should be provided with contact details for both on-site and off-site Church workers.

[**Note:** The keeping of relevant documentation not only improves the safety and wellbeing of children, but also assists in ensuring that public liability and personal indemnity insurance remains enforceable.]

**11.4:** Following the conclusion of any relevant activity, all records relating to that activity must be stored/archived securely in a locked place. ACSQ policies and procedures on archiving are to be followed in relation to these records.

### **12. Children with Parents Who are Separated or Under Court Orders**

**12.1:** If court orders or court arrangements are in place concerning a parental separation or other custody arrangement, information must be obtained to ensure the obligations of the child's parents/guardians are understood, and that the child's involvement in the activity is consistent with the court orders or other arrangements.

**12.2:** Ministry leaders must ensure that no person has contact with a child during a child-related activity who is prohibited by court order from having such contact.

### **13. Visibility of Activities**

**13.1:** Small group activities involving children are to occur in the presence of multiple Church workers (or parents/guardians) in a highly visible location.

**13.2:** Venues used for child-related activities are to provide for the privacy of all persons, including when changing clothes, washing and toileting. If a Church worker is required to assist a child with washing or toileting, they must inform another Church worker (or parent or guardian) to ensure they are at all times satisfactorily supervised.

### **14. Games and Entertainment Activities**

**14.1:** Games or activities that emphasise gender, physical, intellectual or cultural differences are to be carefully assessed for their appropriateness. Church workers must think about the messages conveyed by such games.

**14.2:** Before initiating any game, Church workers must consider each child involved in the activity and how they might feel about the game.

**14.3:** To avoid the possibility of child sexual abuse or harm, Church workers are not to provide games or activities, that involve children moving around unsupervised, such as 'hide and seek' or scavenger hunts.

## 15. Use of Discipline and Corrective Action

**15.1:** Although in general Church workers are to avoid disciplining a child where a parent or guardian is available (or contactable), there may be circumstances where the need to discipline or provide correction is unavoidable.

**15.2:** Ministry leaders must ensure there is an agreed approach with parents/guardians for correcting or disciplining a child if this is required. Such action must avoid any risk of child abuse. The agreed approach is to be made known to all Church workers involved in a child-related activity. Parents and guardians are to be advised that any abuse or harm to a child during child-related activities is not acceptable, and may result in serious consequences for the Church worker (or other supervising adult) who breaches.

**15.3:** If a child's behaviour requires discipline/correction (for example, for their own safety or that of the group), unless there is an emergency situation, a warning must precede any action. Before any action is taken, the child must be given an opportunity to explain their conduct. If the explanation is not satisfactory, the reason for the disciplinary action must be provided in a manner which is appropriate to the age of the child.

**15.4:** In carrying out any disciplinary action in accordance with clause 15.3, the below matters must be observed:

- a. discipline imposed must be appropriate to the situation and the age of the child;
- b. no form of corporal punishment, ridicule, humiliation or other abuse may be used;
- c. young children must not be isolated as a form of discipline;
- d. physical restraint must only be used to protect a child from harm or avoid an accident;
- e. if physical restraint is used, a record must be kept of the restraint, who was involved in administering the restraint, and the circumstances leading to it;
- f. the child's parents or guardians must be informed of any disciplinary action and the relevant circumstances which led to the need for such action; and
- g. a record must be kept of the circumstances and nature of any disciplinary action.

## 16. Responding to Inappropriate Conduct by Children

**16.1:** In some instances, children may make suggestive comments towards a Church worker, may act suggestively towards them, or may otherwise develop feelings for a Church worker and attempt to behave inappropriately in an intimate way. If a child behaves in an inappropriate way towards a Church worker, the Church worker is to:

- a. tell the child that their language or behaviour is not appropriate;
- b. inform their supervisor/manager about the incident and make a written report; and
- c. make a record of any measures taken in response to the inappropriate behaviour.

**16.2:** It is the responsibility of Church workers to recognise inappropriate contact with a child and immediately have such contact cease.

**16.3:** See the [Guidelines on Children and Appropriate Touch](#) for further guidance on how to interact with children in ministry units and during child-related activities.

## 17. Certain Workplace Health and Safety Matters

**17.1:** The following safety related matters complement the [Parish Workplace Health and Safety Manual](#) (Manual), [ACSQ Work Health and Safety Policy](#) (Policy) and any associated procedures. Ministry leaders and relevant Church workers are to be familiar with these frameworks. To the extent of any inconsistency between these procedures and the terms of the Manual or the Policy, the Manual or Policy prevail.

**17.2:** Before running any child-related activity, supervising Church workers must have in place a plan to respond to emergencies or accidents during that activity. The emergency plan must identify and detail actions necessary to minimise all potential hazards involved in the activity. These actions must include ready access to a mobile phone or, if mobile service is not available, plans for an alternative reliable means of communication.

**17.3:** If an emergency does occur during a child-related activity, Church workers are to remain calm and to take steps in accordance with the Manual or Policy, including contacting emergency services where necessary.

**17.4:** All ministry units are to develop a fire response and evacuation procedure consistent with ACSQ requirements. This procedure must be communicated clearly to any children and adults involved in a child-related activity. A template [Emergency Response Poster](#) is available for use by parishes and other ministry units.

**17.5:** All ministry units must have a first aid kit available for child-related activities, and before any activity involving children, ministry units must obtain information from parents or guardians concerning any specific physical and mental health or safety needs of children to be involved in the activity. This is to be obtained through the [Consent and Medical Information for Child-Related Activities Form](#).

**17.6:** Smoking is not permitted in areas where children are present. Church workers must not smoke in the presence of children or inside of buildings, vehicles, tents or enclosures when caring for children. Further, Church workers must not use alcohol, recreational or unlawful drugs on ACSQ premises when they are caring for children, or while undertaking any ACSQ activity involving children, whether or not on ACSQ premises.

**17.7:** All electrical equipment is to be monitored and maintained in accordance with the [ACSQ Electrical Safety Policy](#) and [Electrical Safety Procedures](#). Any power points which are potentially accessible to children must have safety plugs fitted when not in use.

**17.8:** All children's playground equipment maintained by ACSQ must be checked regularly and comply with Australian Safety Standards. Children must not, under any circumstances, be permitted to use any damaged playground equipment.

## 18. If Assistance Required

**18.1:** If you or your supervisor are not sure about your safe ministry obligations as a Church worker, you can seek assistance from the Office of Professional Standards at 1800 242 544 or [professionalstandards@anglicanchurchsq.org.au](mailto:professionalstandards@anglicanchurchsq.org.au).

**18.2:** If the question is in relation to high risk outdoor activities or camps, please contact the Camp and Young Adult Co-Ordinator of the Anglican Youth, Children and Families Ministry (AYCF) at (07) 3514 7412 or [ESkerman@ministryeducation.org.au](mailto:ESkerman@ministryeducation.org.au).



## APPENDIX A

### Criminal Code Failure to Protect Offence

#### **229BB – Failure to protect child from child sexual offence**

- (1) An accountable person commits a crime if:
- a. the person knows there is a significant risk that another adult (the **alleged offender**) will commit a child sexual offence in relation to a child; and
  - b. the alleged offender:
    - i. is associated with an institution; or
    - ii. is a regulated volunteer; and
  - c. the child is under the care, supervision or control of an institution; and
  - d. the child is either:
    - i. under 16 years; or
    - ii. a person with an impairment of the mind; and
  - e. the person has the power or responsibility to remove or reduce the risk; and
  - f. the person wilfully or negligently fails to reduce or remove the risk.

Maximum penalty – 5 years imprisonment.

- (2) For subsection (1), it does not matter that the knowledge was gained by the accountable person during, or in connection with, a religious confession.
- (3) For this section, an adult is associated with an institution if the adult:
- a. owns, or is involved in the management or control of, the institution; or
  - b. is employed or engaged by the institution; or
  - c. works as a volunteer for the institution; or
  - d. engages in an activity in relation to the institution for which a working with children authority under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* is required; or
  - e. engages in the delivery of a service to a child who is under the care, supervision or control of the institution.

(4) In this section:

**accountable person** means an adult who is associated with an institution, other than a regulated volunteer.

**institution** means an entity, other than an individual, that:

- a. provides services to children; or
- b. operates a facility for, or engages in activities with, children under the entity's care, supervision or control.

*Examples of institutions: schools, government agencies, religious organisations, hospitals, child care centres, licensed residential facilities, sporting clubs, youth organisations*

**regulated volunteer** means an adult who is taken to be a volunteer employed or engaged in regulated employment at a person's home, residence or household under any of the following provisions of the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*, schedule 1:

- a. section 4(2) or (3);
- b. section 9(2);
- c. section 14(2).

|                    |                          |  |                          |                               |                          |                               |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Applies To:        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Anglican Schools Commission                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> | Diocesan Services Commission  |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Episcopate & Leadership                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Financial Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ministry Education Commission |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parishes & Other Mission Agencies Commission |                          |                               |                          |                               |
| Related Documents: | <input type="checkbox"/> | Procedure                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Form                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other                         |

## Background

In 2018, the Australian Human Rights Commission's [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) was published, and in October 2020, the National Council of Churches Australia's *Safe Church Child Safety Framework*.

This Guideline is consistent with Principles 2 and 3 of the *National Principles* and the *Child Safety Framework*.

## 1: Advise Children of Their Rights and Responsibilities

**1.1:** All children participating in ministry unit activities are to be informed of their rights and responsibilities under the [Policy for the Protection of Children in Ministry Units](#). This communication is to emphasise the right of the child to be safe when engaged in Church activities, as well as their right to privacy.

**1.2:** All children participating in ministry unit activities are to be informed, where age appropriate, of their right to report any concerning behaviour by Church workers to the Office of Professional Standards, including by making them aware of the terms of the [Protocol for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct](#).

**1.3:** Methods of communicating rights and responsibilities to a child are to take into account:

- a. the age of the child;
- b. the number of children participating; and
- c. the presence or otherwise of any parent or guardian who may assist in facilitating the communication.

**1.4:** In communicating with a child, Church workers are, as age appropriate, to emphasise the expectation that the child will take responsibility to:

- a. consider the rights and safety of others;
- b. act with respect towards their peers and Church workers;
- c. act safely at all times, including following reasonable directions; and
- d. talk to a Church worker if they have any concerns.

**1.5:** For a particularly young child, primary communication is to be with the child's parent or guardian to assist clear communication with the child.

**1.6:** If an activity involves more than four children, key messages are to be provided to the children before the activity commences, even if that activity is low risk. If an individual child's safety or wellbeing is subsequently determined to be potentially at risk, the child must be spoken to individually to help prevent the child's safety being compromised.

**1.7:** In addition to verbal safety-related messages, if the activity is high risk (even though reduced to low risk through mitigatory actions taken), before the activity commences, Ministry leaders are to provide written safety messages for the children and parent(s)/guardian(s).

**1.8:** When communicating with children, it is important that you ask questions to help ensure the children understand the safety messages being communicated.

## **2: Understand the Importance of Peer Networks**

In working with children, Church workers are to understand the importance of peer networks to help children feel safe and not isolated. This means facilitating opportunities for children to establish and nurture healthy friendships, and enabling children to speak out about any behaviour which may be having a damaging effect on their safety or wellbeing.

## **3: Involve Children in the Review of Safe Ministry Policies**

**3.1:** Taking into account the age of children, Church workers are to encourage children to actively participate in the creation of a safe environment within ministry units, both for policy and operational purposes. In practice, this will mean reviewing relevant policies and procedures and child-related practices in consultation with children, including best practice for communicating with children. This may also include encouraging children to contribute to the parameters and goals of any task during a child-related activity.

**3.2:** In seeking children's perspectives, Ministry leaders are to:

- a. use inclusive and empowering child-friendly language when explaining safety practices and seeking feedback;
- b. ensure the children know how to provide feedback, and who to raise concerns with;
- c. ensure they are aware of a child's particular needs, and that the child's feedback is obtained to meet those needs; and
- d. consider the age, capabilities and culture of a child in communicating with a child about an activity.

**3.3:** All Church workers are to value and respect the perspectives of a child, and how each child identifies as a person.

**3.4:** Unless there are good reasons not to, a child is to be carefully listened to in all instances, and supported and encouraged to voice their opinion during activities.

**3.5:** Church workers are to understand the developmental needs of children, including how to assist children build on their strengths and capacities during activities.

**3.6:** At all times, communication with a child is to be transparent and never involve secrets. If necessary or on request, all communication with a child is to be made known to the child's parent(s) or guardian(s).

#### **4: Involve Families and Communities in Decision Making**

**4.1:** When making any significant decision about the safety or welfare of a child, Ministry leaders are to involve the child's parent(s) or guardian(s).

**4.2:** All members of the ministry unit community are to be encouraged by Ministry leaders to engage in creating a safe environment in the ministry unit. Further, open discussion within the ministry unit is critical to creating a safe environment.

**4.3:** All relevant policies and procedures, including the [Policy for the Protection of Children in Ministry Units](#) and the [Code of Conduct for Ministry to Children in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland](#), must be made available to all members of the ministry unit community, and important announcements concerning child safety and wellbeing are to be widely communicated to community members both verbally and in writing.

**4.4:** All parents or guardians of children involved in ministry units are to be made aware that they can report any concerning behaviour by Church workers towards their own, or any other children, to the Office of Professional Standards, including by making them aware of the terms of the [Protocol for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct](#).

**4.5:** Where possible, ministry unit community members, particularly those with children involved in ministry unit activities, are to be consulted during the development of any major ministry unit policy or procedure concerning the safety and wellbeing of children.

#### **Associated Procedures/Guidelines**

In considering the above, Church workers are to note the following associated documents:

- [Procedure and Information for Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children in Ministry Units](#)
- [Guidelines for Outdoor Activities with Children](#)
- [Guidelines for Use of Digital Mediums with Children](#)
- [Guidelines for Transporting Children](#)
- [Guidelines on Children and Appropriate Touch](#)

|                    |                          |  |                          |                               |                          |                               |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Applies To:        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Anglican Schools Commission                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> | Diocesan Services Commission  |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Episcopate & Leadership                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Financial Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ministry Education Commission |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parishes & Other Mission Agencies Commission |                          |                               |                          |                               |
| Related Documents: | <input type="checkbox"/> | Procedure                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Form                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other                         |

These guidelines are to be read together with the [Procedure and Information for Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children in Ministry Units](#). To the extent of any inconsistency between these guideline and that procedure, these guidelines prevail.

Outdoor activities inherently carry greater risk than those held indoors. This is because an outdoor environment has more unpredictable risks. Therefore, a Church worker will need to exercise greater care than usual if planning and running an outdoor activity with children.

## 1: Key Steps for Outdoor Activities

When undertaking an outdoor activity with children, Church workers must:

- a) obtain written consent from a parent or guardian prior to involving a child in the outdoor activity, with such consent being specific to the outdoor activity undertaken (rather than a general consent);
- b) check and verify if a child involved in the activity has a health or medical condition that may limit the child's ability to participate, or may change the level of anticipated risk for that child;
- c) check and verify if any adult supervising the activity has a health or medical condition that may limit their capacity to provide assistance to a child harmed or at risk of harm during an activity;
- d) ensure that Church workers have the means to contact emergency services;
- e) ensure that a Church worker present for the activity has basic current first aid training, and that an appropriately stocked first aid kit is available during the activity (blanket, bandages, ice packs etc.);
- f) arrange a 'check-in' reporting system, including deadlines, with a designated person, as per 1.1(g), or an external agency; and
- g) if the outdoor activity involves travelling or moving from place to place, communicate dates, times and prospective stage points (where relevant) to a person that knows of the activity, and understands they are responsible to act if required to do so. If appropriate, external agencies, such as the police or local park rangers, are to be informed. Parents/guardians are to be provided a schedule of movements and places.

## 2: Environmental Safety

**2.1:** Church workers must never lead children into an outdoor environment that is unknown to those Church workers. Steps must be taken to ensure that any unknown area is assessed in detail before the activity is held.

**2.2:** Church workers must never take children into an environment with extreme heat conditions (such as hot and dry terrain or cold hilly locations) unless they are very familiar with, and knowledgeable about, the first aid treatment for heatstroke and hypothermia. Remember, the body loses heat quickly from any uncovered skin.

## 3: Contacting Emergency Services

The ability to contact emergency services during any outdoor activity is essential. Before commencing any outdoor activity, all Church workers involved must know:

- a) what equipment will be used to contact emergency services (e.g. mobile, radio, etc);
- b) the effective range of the equipment to be used (remember, mobiles rely on network coverage); and
- c) who will be responsible for carrying the communication device so that it always ready for use in an emergency.

## 4: Plan for Emergencies and Evacuations

**4.1:** Outdoor activities must have an emergency evacuation plan covering the how, when and where of how to evacuate to a safe area.

**4.2:** There must also be a plan in place for responding to any accidents or other incidents during the activity.

**4.3:** These plans are to form part of the broader risk management plan prepared for any child-related activity, under the [Procedure and Information for Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children in Ministry Units](#).

## 5: Protective Clothing and Equipment

Church workers must identify basic minimum standards for protective clothing and equipment required for an activity. These standards must be made known to participating children and supervising adults at least seven days prior to the activity. Each child's clothing and equipment must be carefully checked by Church workers prior to departure and, if necessary, inadequately dressed or equipped attendees are not to participate in the activity.

## 6: Weather Forecast and Inclement Weather

Before commencing any outdoor activity, Church workers must obtain up-to-date weather information, and must maintain awareness of weather conditions during the activity. Church workers must know how shelter will be obtained if inclement weather is encountered, and must turn back if they have any doubts about associated risks.

## 7: Orienteering Activities

Where an outdoor activity involves orienteering, all Church workers involved in that activity must have advanced skills and experience in the use and reading of maps and the use of compasses.

## 8: Contact Person for Outdoor Activities

Advice regarding planning for an outdoor activity is to be sought from the Camp and Young Adult Co-Ordinator of the Anglican Youth, Children and Families Ministry (AYCF), who can be contacted at (07) 3514 7412.

## Associated Procedures/Guidelines

In considering the above, Church workers are to note the following associated documents:

- [Procedure and Information for Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children in Ministry Units](#)
- [Guidelines for Engaging With Children, Families and Communities](#)
- [Guidelines for Use of Digital Mediums with Children](#)
- [Guidelines for Transporting Children](#)
- [Guidelines on Children and Appropriate Touch](#)



|                    |                          |  |                          |                               |                          |                               |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Applies To:        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Anglican Schools Commission                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> | Diocesan Services Commission  |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Episcopate & Leadership                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Financial Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ministry Education Commission |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parishes & Other Mission Agencies Commission |                          |                               |                          |                               |
| Related Documents: | <input type="checkbox"/> | Procedure                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Form                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other                         |

## 1: Taking Images or Recordings of Children

Ministry leaders must ensure that Church workers obtain parent/guardian permission before making or using images (including photographs or videos) of children who are engaged in any activity within the ministry unit. The [Consent and Medical Information for Child-Related Activities Form](#) is to be used.

## 2: Use of Digital Media in Child-Related Activities

**2.1:** Church workers must know the ages of all children involved in an activity and abide by relevant censorship standards if showing or providing any form of digital media to children. Church workers are to review all aural or visual materials to be used to ensure that they are appropriate for the intended audience. Such consideration will include taking into account the age of the youngest child present, or likely to be present, and ensuring the material is appropriate for that child.

**2.2:** Any Church worker in doubt in relation to the appropriateness of any digital media, must seek their ministry leader's advice before showing material to children in their care.

## 3: Digital Communication with Children

[**Note:** Digital communication includes communication through email, text, instance messaging services, social networking sites, chat rooms, video conferencing, blogs and internet forums.]

**3.1:** When using digital communication, Church workers are to apply the same principles they do for any other form of communication with a child. This will include taking reasonable steps to ensure that:

- a) the method of communication is appropriate;
- b) consideration is given to ensure no adverse impact is made on a child by the words and/or images used, or on any other person who may access that material (including other children who may have access to the material);
- c) sexually suggestive, explicit or offensive languages or images are not to be used; and
- d) communication is not to be used that might reasonably be interpreted to suggest that the Church worker has an inappropriate relationship with the child.

**3.2:** There are a number of risks involved with the use of digital communication when communicating with children. These risks are manifold and include:

- a) the social media profile of a child being accessed or used by an external party because of inadequate security settings or poor security management. This may result in a child being communicated with in a potentially very damaging way;
- b) contact details or images of a child being inadvertently disclosed in communications;
- c) the general inability to verify if a person is who they say they are online;
- d) potentially exposing a child to unwanted or inappropriate information; and
- e) exposing a child to the risk of cyberbullying, or a sexual predator gaining access to the child through the online environment.

**3.3:** Church workers can help children remain safe when using digital communications by:

- a) educating children (as well as parents/guardians) about the risks associated with such communication;
- b) encouraging children to exercise care in disclosing any personal information about themselves or others through digital communications, including, where possible, disclosing alternative contact details;
- c) encouraging children to talk about any concerns or worries. This might be with a family member, a Church worker or other adult with whom they have a pastoral relationship, rather than posting such matters for discussion on public forums such as chat rooms or blogs; and
- d) encouraging children to report to a person they trust anything they see or experience online that worries them or otherwise makes them uncomfortable.

### **Associated Procedures/Guidelines**

In considering the above, Church workers are to note the following associated documents:

- [\*Procedure and Information for Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children in Ministry Units\*](#)
- [\*Guidelines for Engaging With Children, Families and Communities\*](#)
- [\*Guidelines for Outdoor Activities with Children\*](#)
- [\*Guidelines for Transporting Children\*](#)
- [\*Guidelines on Children and Appropriate Touch\*](#)

|                    |                          |  |                          |                               |                          |                               |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Applies To:        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Anglican Schools Commission                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> | Diocesan Services Commission  |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Episcopate & Leadership                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Financial Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ministry Education Commission |
|                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parishes & Other Mission Agencies Commission |                          |                               |                          |                               |
| Related Documents: | <input type="checkbox"/> | Procedure                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Form                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other                         |

When Church workers are transporting children to, from or during any ACSQ activity, additional care must be taken to ensure the safety of those children.

## 1: Parental Consent

Parents/guardians must be informed about, and provide consent to, any transport arrangements. Where practical, parents/guardians should be given the option of transporting their own children.

## 2: Roadworthiness

All vehicles used must be safe, roadworthy and properly registered with state authorities. They must be fitted with appropriate child restraints or safety devices (e.g. seat belts for cars, life jackets for boats).

## 3: Insurance

Where possible, vehicles must be comprehensively insured, and drivers/owners must understand that, in the event of damage to the vehicle, ACSQ will not bear any obligation to cover the costs of repairs.

## 4: Driver Competence

**4.1:** All drivers must be competent drivers with an open licence and at least two years of driving experience. Drivers must have an acceptable driving history, with no evidence of repeated speeding offences or drink driving.

**4.2:** Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that drivers are not impaired by alcohol or mind-altering substances.

## 5: Seatbelts

All children must wear a seatbelt at all times while in a private vehicle and must never be transported in a vehicle that does not have seat belts (except where the children are being accompanied on public transport).

## 6: Driving Unaccompanied Child

To the extent practicable, Church workers are to avoid being alone with a child during transport arrangements, including driving an unaccompanied child home. Where such situations cannot be avoided, another adult must be informed of the transport arrangements and the reason for those arrangements (e.g. emergency transport).

## 7: Public Transport

**7.1:** If using public transport, Church workers must keep an accurate record of the names of all children present.

**7.2:** Standing in buses must not be permitted and seatbelts must be worn where fitted. Activity leaders must take reasonable steps to satisfy themselves that the bus driver has an appropriate and current licence for the vehicle.

## 8: Travelling in Hazardous Conditions

When transport may involve conditions that are hazardous, Church workers must be satisfied that the trip will be safe, the driver is reliable and has experience in those conditions, and the vehicle is mechanically sound and properly equipped for the conditions. If the Church worker is not satisfied, the planned travel must not occur.

## Associated Procedures/Guidelines

In considering the above, Church workers are to note the following associated documents:

- [\*Procedure and Information for Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children in Ministry Units\*](#)
- [\*Guidelines for Engaging With Children, Families and Communities\*](#)
- [\*Guidelines for Outdoor Activities with Children\*](#)
- [\*Guidelines for Use of Digital Mediums with Children\*](#)
- [\*Guidelines on Children and Appropriate Touch\*](#)

Applies To:

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anglican Schools Commission                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> Diocesan Services Commission  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Episcopate & Leadership                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Services Commission | <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry Education Commission |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parishes & Other Mission Agencies Commission |  |  |

Related Documents:

|                                    |                               |                                |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Procedure | <input type="checkbox"/> Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|

The following guidelines assist Church workers to determine what is appropriate and inappropriate touch when interacting with children. This is both in relation to their own interactions with children, and in helping recognise the signs of potentially harmful behaviours of others:

- a) Appropriate touch does not give the impression or appearance of wrongdoing;
- b) When working with children, the behaviour of Church workers must be above reproach and foster trust at all times;
- c) A child's preference not to be touched must be respected. This particularly means Church workers must be aware of cultural sensitivities in relation to touch;
- d) The integrity of the child is to be respected at all times, and common sense and good judgement must be used in protecting the personal space of children;
- e) Touching should be initiated by the child, or a response to their need for comforting or encouragement. Touching a child must NEVER be about meeting an adult's emotional or physical needs;
- f) Church workers are to develop a habit of asking permission from children before touching them. For example, if a child is hurt, the child should be asked if they would like a comforting hug or not;
- g) In most circumstances, hugging from the side, placing a comforting arm around the shoulder, or giving a 'good on you' pat to the shoulder are appropriate between Church workers and children. Such contact is important to a child's development, provided the gesture is also situationally appropriate (for instance, in public view);
- h) Touching and affection are only to be given in the presence of other Church workers. Touching is less likely to be misconstrued when at least one other adult is present and able to observe the interaction;
- i) Physical touch involving a child must always be age appropriate. For example, it is generally appropriate for a four year old child to sit on a Church worker's lap, but it is not appropriate for a teenager and a Church worker to interact in this manner;
- j) In matters of physical education, it is appropriate to physically demonstrate to a child how to throw a ball or javelin or to adjust a harness for abseiling etc. However, permission from the child must always be given before performing a demonstration or equipment check that requires touch. Alternatively, another child present can be asked to assist the child with the demonstration or equipment check;

- k) If a child wants to initiate touch which is not appropriate, such touch must be stopped. The child is to be discouraged kindly from initiating that touch, and an alternative provided such as offering a hi-five instead of a hug;
- l) When a child is hurt or feeling ill and needs to be examined immediately, another person of the same sex as the child must be present in the room while a Church worker carries out the examination;
- m) Church workers must never examine a child's private parts, and must not force a child to remove their clothing or take photographs of a child's injuries. It is for the police to take such photos when needed; and
- n) Church workers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate touch by others (including other Church workers), and must raise any observed inappropriate touch with their supervisor/manager, as well as the Office of Professional Standards if there is concern about sexualised conduct.

### **Associated Procedures/Guidelines**

In considering the above, Church workers are to note the following associated documents:

- [Procedure and Information for Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children in Ministry Units](#)
- [Guidelines for Engaging With Children, Families and Communities](#)
- [Guidelines for Outdoor Activities with Children](#)
- [Guidelines for Use of Digital Mediums with Children](#)
- [Guidelines for Transporting Children](#)