

Applies To:	☐ Anglican Schools Commission	☐ Community Services Commission	☐ Diocesan Services Commission
	☐ Episcopate & Leadership	☐ Financial Services Commission	☐ Ministry Education Commission
	☐ Parishes & Other Mission Agencies Commission		
Related Documents:	☐ Procedure	☐ Form	☐ 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:

- a member of the clergy;
- a person employed by a ministry unit; or
- 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.