



# Safe Ministry Policy

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| TYPE            | Policy   |
| SUBJECT         | Safe Ministry Policy   |
| AUTHORISED BY   | Diocesan Council in accordance with Part 3 of the Professional Standards Ordinance 2017. |
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## Scope

The Safe Ministry Policy applies to all Parishes, Ministry Units, Entities and all church workers (ordained and non-ordained, paid and voluntary, licensed and unlicensed) whose ministry is associated with the ministry of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Northern Territory, with the exception of Anglicare NT and Nungalinga College. These organisations have their own safety policies and protocols as approved by their respective boards.

## Commitment

The Diocese of the Northern Territory is committed to safe ministries. This means that Diocesan parishes, ministries and entities should be person-valuing, harm-free and respectful environments for ministry to God's glory.

This Safe Ministry policy expresses our Diocese's commitment to our pastoral, biblical, insurance, legal and duty of care responsibilities, in accordance with Part 3 of the Professional Standards Ordinance 2017 and associated protocols, with the intended goal that all ministries are spiritually, emotionally and physically safe.

As a Diocese we are also committed to implementing the recommendations from the Anglican General Synod in relation to safer ministry underpinned by the Diocesan Code of Conduct: *Faithfulness in Service*.

As a Diocese we are also committed to ensuring that the collection, storage, access to, and sharing of information is consistent with legislated Privacy Principles.

We therefore seek to build and maintain safe ministry communities by:

- fostering relationships between members, and people in the wider community, based on the teachings of Jesus Christ
- establishing and maintaining guidelines and processes to minimise the risk of harm and abuse, ministry misconduct and the misuse of positional power
- providing responsible and loving Christian leadership and management practices built on a scriptural base
- ensuring that cases of alleged abuse, ministry misconduct and grievances are handled in a consistent, transparent, fair and just manner (also known as procedural fairness) and that these processes are child-focused when involving children and young people.
- Acknowledging the need for sensitivity and special consideration of people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as any person with a disability.

## Rationale

We affirm that all people have the right to be spiritually, emotionally and physically safe.

This Policy and the Code of Conduct are underpinned by Jesus Christ's words: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and love your neighbour as yourself." These commands guide our

behaviour in our relationships and provide the basis for the establishment and exercise of safe activities and events, run in safe environments in an abuse-free Christian community. Further, the Bible identifies classes of vulnerable people who are to be protected and given special care and treatment in society because of their powerlessness such as the poor, widows, orphans and aliens (Exodus 22:21-22, Deuteronomy 10:17-19, Jeremiah 22:2-4, James 1:27. As God's people we are called to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly before him (Micah 6:8).

This policy has been developed to help us live out our biblical mandate and our responsibilities under the Anglican Church of Australia and government legislation and regulations.

## Policy Statements

### 1) Safe Recruitment

- All church workers are assessed for their suitability before they are appointed in ministry positions by following "SM002 Safe Ministry Screening Protocol".

### 2) Adequate Training

- All church workers regularly undertake approved Safe Ministry Training, as specified in "SM002 Safe Ministry Screening Protocol".
- Note: In addition to the safe ministry screening training, Course 3 (Implementation) is available face to face and via video conference and is mandatory every three years for Rectors, PSMA's, DSMO, members of Diocesan Council and Bishops. Course 3 is strongly advised for members of Parish Council and MDT members.

### 3) Continued Supervision

- All church workers are encouraged to access on-going leadership training, supervision and support.
- All church workers are required to embrace and comply with the Diocesan Code of Conduct: *Faithfulness in Service*.
- All church workers are required to comply with all relevant canons, ordinances, policies and protocols.

### 4) Safe Environments

- The ideas and feelings of program participants, including children and their families, are valued through encouraging input into the programs and activities in which they are participate, and freedom to decline participation in any part of a program.
- Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

All church workers take all reasonable and practical steps to minimise risks of physical and psychological harm and care for their own health and the health of others involved in ministry;

- Parish Councils together with ministry leaders are responsible for meeting the requirements of the Diocese's "[WHS002 Work Health & Safety Policy](#)".
- Parish Councils and relevant Church workers follow the Diocesan "PP001 Privacy Policy" with respect to information relating to other church workers and program participants.

### 5) Safe to raise concerns

- Church workers are required to report all safe ministry concerns, including grievances, significant breaches of *Faithfulness in Service* or disclosures or suspicions of child abuse and/or sexual misconduct to the Diocesan Safe Ministry Helpline. The Helpline staff ensure the implementation of the appropriate safe ministry ordinance, policy and/or protocols.

- Church workers are committed to a child-centered approach to responding to concerns about a child or group of children who may be at risk of harm.  
Church workers are committed to providing survivors of sexual and/or child abuse by church workers with appropriate care and assistance through our Diocesan process for provision of pastoral care and assistance for those abused by church workers.
- Where a church worker has an allegation of ministry misconduct made against them, appropriate protocols including “SM006 Faithfulness in Service Investigation Committee Protocol” and “SM009\_Responding-to-Sexual-Misconduct\_Protocol” are implemented to ensure that all parties receive appropriate support, and procedural fairness.

## Roles and Responsibilities

All clergy, Parish Councils, and those in authority are responsible for ensuring that as far as is reasonably practicable all church workers and those accessing ministries conducted by the ministry entity comply with the protocols and guidelines established under this policy. In particular:

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| Bishop                                | <p>The Head of Agency, or Church Authority as defined by the Professional Standards Ordinance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Oversees and implements Safe Ministry Policy and Protocols at Diocesan level</li> <li>- Licenses &amp; Appoints clergy</li> <li>- Licenses church workers</li> <li>- Disciplines Clergy and church workers according to Ordinance, Canons and Safe Ministry Protocols</li> <li>- Reports to Government statutory authorities</li> <li>- Where there is a failure to implement or adhere to the Safe Ministry Policy or Protocols the Bishop has the right:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to seek risk management advice</li> <li>- to review any church worker’s safe ministry clearance</li> <li>- to remove any church worker’s clearance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| Diocesan Council (DC)                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carries out relevant functions according to the Canons and Ordinances, including approves all Safe Ministry Policy and protocols for the diocese</li> <li>- Assigns tasks to office holders to ensure the implementation of this Policy</li> <li>- Ensures office holders have adequate resources for the implementation of the Safe Ministry Policy and Protocols</li> <li>- Appoints members of the Diocesan Tribunal, Professional Standards Committee (PSC), <i>Faithfulness in Service</i> investigations Committee (FiSIC) and of the Diocesan Safe Ministry Reference Group</li> </ul>  |
| Diocesan Safe Ministry Officer (DSMO) | <p>Appointed by the Bishop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides support in the implementation of Safe Ministry Ordinance, Policy and Protocols, including undertaking national register checks, issuing clearance notices, record keeping and monitoring compliance and completion of reviews</li> <li>- Provides administrative support to the Diocesan Professional Standards Committee, Safe Ministry Reference Group, Faithfulness in Service Investigations Committee and to the Bishop in safe ministry matters.</li> <li>- Supports the parishes in matters relevant to safe ministry compliance</li> <li>- Where there is a change to Diocesan requirements for safe ministry clearance due to amendment to legislation, policy or protocol the DSMO will make a determination in each instance as to the urgency of implementing the new requirement. In general, those who have</li> </ul> |

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|  | already received clearance, are not expected to resubmit updated clearance paperwork until their 3 year renewal is due   |
| Diocesan Safe Ministry Reference Group (SMRG)  | Appointed by DC comprising both lay and clerical members.<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Writes, reviews and provides recommendations to Diocesan Council in relation to Safe Ministry related Ordinance, Policy, Protocols and training requirements.</li> </ul>   |
| Faithfulness in Service Investigations Committee (FISIC)<br>Professional Standards Committee (PSC) | Appointed by DC comprising both lay and clerical members.<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implements “SM006 Faithfulness in Service Investigations Committee Protocol”</li> <li>- Investigates allegations of breaches of the Diocesan Code of Conduct , excluding sexual misconduct</li> </ul><br>Appointed by DC comprising both lay and clerical members.<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implements “SM009 Protocol for Responding to Information about Sexual Misconduct”</li> <li>- Investigates allegations of sexual misconduct by church workers</li> </ul> |
| Director of Professional Standards (DPS)   | Appointed by DC<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carries out all functions as detailed in the Canons and Ordinances of the Diocese and relevant safe ministry policy and protocols.</li> </ul>  |

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| Parish Council                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Oversees the implementation of the Safe Ministry Canons, Ordinances and Policies and Protocols at a parish level.</li> <li>- Is responsible for parish compliance with “PP001 Privacy Policy” of the Diocese.</li> </ul>   |
| Rector                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appoints lay church workers through “SM002 Safe Ministry Screening Protocol”.</li> <li>- With Parish Council, implements Safe Ministry Policy and Protocols within the parish.</li> <li>- Provides direction and supervision for workers, including establishing any areas of delegation under “SM012 Parish Safe Ministry Administrator Protocol”.</li> </ul> |
| Parish Safe Ministry Administrator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implements “SM012 Parish Safe Ministry Administrator Protocol”</li> </ul>  |
| Church Workers                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complies with Canons, Ordinances, relevant codes of conduct, the Safe Ministry Policy and Protocols and any processes established under them.</li> </ul>   |

If it is not clear which authority is responsible to implement a particular protocol, or part thereof, then:

- In relation to Diocesan property and WHS, the church worker should contact the Diocesan Registrar to clarify
- In relation to all clergy and lay stipendiary ministers, the question should be directed to the Bishop’s Office.
- In relation to Diocesan roles (such as those serving on Diocesan boards or committees), the question should be directed to the Bishop’s Office.
- In relation to culturally and linguistically diverse parishes who may require a modified process, the question should be directed to the Bishop’s Office.

- In relation to all other church workers, the question should be directed to the Rector or Safe Ministry Helpline.

## Policy Definitions

The definitions in the policy are set out in the relevant Acts, Regulations, Canons, Diocesan Ordinances, and the Diocesan Code of Conduct: *Faithfulness in Service* as listed below.

### Government Requirements:

- The Care and Protection of Children Act (2007)
- The Domestic and Family Violence Act (2007)

### Church Requirements:

- Clergy Appointments Regulation Ordinance
- The Safe Ministry to Children Canon (2017)
- National Register Canon (2007)
- The Offences Canon (1962)
- The Diocesan Code of Conduct: *Faithfulness in Service* (November 2016)
- Professional Standards Ordinance (2017)
- Clergy Appointment and Regulation Ordinance (2017)
- PP001: Diocesan Privacy Policy
- Anglican Church of Australia Policy for Safe Ministry in a parish where there is a risk of sexual abuse by a Person of Concern

### Diocesan Protocols:

- SM002: Safe Ministry Screening Protocol
- SM003: Grievance Protocol
- SM006: Faithfulness in Service Investigations Committee Protocol
- SM007: Short Term Volunteer Worker Protocol
- SM009: Protocol for Responding to Information about Sexual Misconduct
- SM012: Parish Safe Ministry Administrator Protocol