

# Safe Ministry Representatives

## Parish Policy Development - A guide

October 2014

---

Diocesan safe ministry guidelines can never accommodate every set of ministry circumstances in our parishes.

Large churches have a very different set of opportunities and challenges than small churches and vice versa.

Development of a set of safe ministry policies for every parish, based on and compliant with the Diocesan Safe Ministry Guidelines are needed. These should be developed in close association with the Senior Minister, and when ready, presented to the Parish Council for formal approval and adoption. Note that after the initial process to develop a basic set of policies, this should be seen as an ongoing process as ministries come and go and church life changes.

This is a broad guide to help you get started, and the Safe Ministry Representative Liaison Officer is available most days to consult with you in the process, and before presentation to your Parish Council.

Many of the areas mentioned here already have resources to guide your implementation. Many of these are available on the Youthworks website:

<http://www.youthworks.net/safeministry/downloads>

### 1. **A ministry audit.**

Before you do anything else, sit down with your minister and generate a list of all ministries/activities that involve children or young people (and keep in mind that we begin to expand the concept of 'safe ministry' to include all vulnerable people from the start of 2015).

Some groups/activities to make sure you include:

- Crèche (Sunday morning and bible study crèches, etc.)
- Sunday children's ministries
- Mid-week children's ministries (Kids clubs, play groups, mums groups, CEBS, GFS, etc.)
- Sunday high school groups
- Youth groups (including small groups that may meet away from the main group meeting time)
- Special interest groups (sport teams, etc)
- Ministries with adult, but vulnerable people at their core.

**Professional Standards Unit - Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney**

Neil Atwood – Safe Ministry Representative Liaison

[nta@sydney.anglican.asn.au](mailto:nta@sydney.anglican.asn.au)

0414-777-841

## 2. Screening policy.

The WWCC is an obvious important step in our screening process, but this should not be seen as sufficient screening in itself.

The first step in a screening process (apart from the WWCC) is for the person volunteering to **speak to the ministry staff person** responsible for the ministry they are interested in.

**A leadership pack** should be made available to potential leaders.

**Application form.** See the sample volunteer application form attached.

The application form can build in WWCC information for ease of processing, it should also ask for details of any previous experience with the age group concerned, and for 2-3 character references. There is a basic form available on the PSU website, but the example attached is a very comprehensive form that you may find useful to adapt to your church.

In particular, you should develop policies to deal with new volunteers who are:

- *New church members.* What policy will you have for people new (<6 months) to your church who want to volunteer.
- *New church members recently moved from interstate or overseas.* These are a special case and your policy should definitely include the requirement to obtain a full police background check in addition to the WWCC. Please do contact the Safe Ministry Representative Liaison Officer for further details should you need to invoke this policy.
- *<18 year old.* You should have a copy of the declaration that should be completed and signed by young volunteers <18 years old and one of their parents. This form is designed to be used by young people in high school (eg: ~12 years and older). Consider what other safeguards you would want to put in place for these young people and what training you would require.
- *WWCC Exemptions.* You are probably aware of the various categories of exemptions for the WWCC, and it is important to establish your church policy on which of those will apply and which you choose to not apply.

## Leadership Pack

This should include:

- Information about the ministry
- Relevant screening procedures eg background checks, WWCC
- Job Description with expectations of a leader
- Code of Conduct eg Faithfulness in Service
- Application form for ministry
- Core and other relevant guidelines (see Safe Min. Appendix)

## 3. Safe Ministry Training.

- What will be your policy regarding the timing of volunteers undertaking essential training?
- Will you allow a grace period for a volunteer to start before they do Part A and B, or will you require full compliance before they begin?

### Professional Standards Unit - Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney

Neil Atwood – Safe Ministry Representative Liaison

nta@sydney.anglican.asn.au

0414-777-841

- What will your policy be for volunteers whose training has expired? At what point when their training is out of date will they be asked to step down?
- Are there ministries that you will exempt from safe ministry training (eg: some parent-run crèches)?

#### 4. Other areas.

This is where your local knowledge comes into play.

There are endless combinations of ministries and activities that you may want to mention and develop policies for, depending on what happens in your church, what your buildings are like, the size of meeting, etc, etc.

We suggest going back to your ministry audit and going through one by one and listing any policies relevant to that ministry/activity.

Some examples:

- Kids/Youth Ministries:
  - i. List leader/member ratios for different groups (see safe ministry training material for suggested ratios)
  - ii. What is your policy re: WWCC and Safe Ministry Training for people helping with a crèche – both parents of crèche children and rostered volunteers with no crèche children?
  - iii. What are your key policies and practices for off-site groups, if any.
  - iv. What is your transport policy for youth and kids groups – both for off-site activities and transport to and from regular, on-site meetings?
  - v. What is your policy for reporting incidents (in terms of the process and people to inform)?
  - vi. What is your policy with regards to registration forms for children's ministries and youth groups? Does it comply with current PSU policy?
  - vii. What is your policy re: checking children in and out of groups?
- Youth Ministries:
  - i. What is your policy for off-site youth group outings, weekends away and similar events?
  - ii. What is your policy for 'marking the roll' at youth group?
- Other areas:
  - i. What is your privacy policy? Given that you are storing personal information of volunteers, it may be worth stating the church's privacy policy (ensuring compliance with Diocesan policy).

This list is far from exhaustive, and should be seen as a starting point only.

When you have completed the first version of your policy document, your church leadership should decide on the best way to disseminate it, firstly to ministry leaders, then to church members.

It should be seen as a document that is always under review and should be formally updated each year.

An abbreviated version (one page) should also be freely available and even posted on your notice board at church.

***Neil Atwood***

Safe Ministry Representative Liaison Officer

V1.1 October 2014

**Professional Standards Unit - Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney**

Neil Atwood – Safe Ministry Representative Liaison

[nta@sydney.anglican.asn.au](mailto:nta@sydney.anglican.asn.au)

0414-777-841