

**Anglican Church of Australia**

**Anglican Diocese of Melbourne**

# **Code of Conduct for Child Safety**

Approved by Archbishop in Council 22 March 2018

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## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILD SAFETY

### OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

The Anglican Church of Australia within the Diocese of Melbourne, including its Cathedral Church of St Paul and each parish or congregation or faith community within the diocese (**the Church**) is committed to child safe practice. The care, the safety and the welfare of children are embedded in policies and practices which reflect a commitment to zero tolerance of child abuse.

When Jesus uttered his beautiful words, 'let the children come to me and do not hinder them' (Matt 19:14) he set the benchmark for us. We want to continue to be a Church where children and families are welcome and participate fully. We want to be an open community where people of all ages gather and interact. We want to be a Church where children and young people are fully engaged and have every opportunity to flourish and grow. We want to be a safe place and to put no barriers in place that will harm or hinder children and young people.

In all its actions and programs, we seek to maintain high ethical standards and work in accordance with child safe practices and child protection reporting obligations and guidelines. The participation and empowerment of all children is a consideration in decision-making, as we seek to provide a safe and nurturing environment where children are respected and listened to.

The Church has zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we will follow rigorously. We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

### APPROVAL OF THE CODE

To those ends, the Archbishop in Council of the Diocese as the authorized governing body has prescribed and approved the following Code of Conduct for Child Safety:

1. This Code of Conduct for Child Safety is intended to be read with and supplemental to the National Code of Conduct of the Church – Faithfulness in Service. A Church worker is expected to meet the standards and follow the guidelines in both Faithfulness in Service and this Code of Conduct for Child Safety.
2. This Code is made—
  - (a) pursuant to s14 of the *Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016* (Melb) (**the Professional Standards legislation**) and s6 of the *Episcopal Standards Act 2015*; and
  - (b) in compliance with the requirements of Victorian State law to meet prescribed child safe standards;<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, s20 standard No 3.

The expression “abuse” in this Code means bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse or spiritual abuse within the meaning of those terms in the Professional Standards legislation. The expression “child” means a person under the age of 18 years and a “young person” refers to a teenager under the age of 18 years.

3. This Code of Conduct applies to all ‘Church workers’, as defined in schedule 1 of the Professional Standards legislation. Broadly that expression means—
  - (a) each member of the clergy and each lay minister; and
  - (b) each lay person, remunerated or voluntary, holding a role office or position in a congregation or parish or in the Cathedral or in the Diocesan Offices or in the Cursillo movement or otherwise in the Church in the Diocese. This is a wide class that includes a rostered reader, intercessor, welcomer, choir member, musician, pastoral care visitor or catering volunteer.

Each Church worker engaged in child-related work is responsible for keeping a professional role with children. This includes establishing and maintaining clear boundaries which serve to protect everyone from misunderstandings. It also applies to the Archbishop. Where the context so admits, a reference to a Church worker is to be taken to include the Archbishop.

4. This Code sets out in more detail the standards of behaviour which the Anglican Church in the Diocese expects from all people associated with or representing it to ensure child safety. It is the responsibility of each Church worker to be aware of and meet these standards and, unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so, to follow the guidelines. The latter explain and illustrate best practice and highlight practical ways to achieve it.

## PURPOSE

5. Following this code will help to protect children and young people from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from adults. It will also help staff and volunteers to maintain the standards of behaviour expected of them. A code of conduct that everyone adheres to also serves to protect the organisation from instances of child abuse because opportunities for harm are actively reduced.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF THE CODE IS BREACHED?

6. A failure to meet a standard or, unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so, to follow a guideline, as prescribed in this Code is a relevant factor in determining the fitness or otherwise of the Church worker for any role office or position in the Church and may trigger action against the person by the Professional Standards Board and Review Board, including removal from their role office or position.

## OUR OBLIGATIONS TO REPORT

7. Both the State and the Church have expectations and requirements as to when and how a Church worker must report certain misconduct:

**A. UNDER STATE LAW**

8. **Failing to Disclose Abuse: Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), [s327](#):** Since 2014, [s327](#) requires that all Victorians over the age of 18 years of age who reasonably believe that a child has been sexually abused or groomed by a person of or over the age of 18 years must report the matter to the police as soon as it is practicable to do so, unless they have a reasonable excuse for not doing so. Failure to do so is a criminal offence punishable by a maximum of 3 years imprisonment.
9. If a child is in immediate danger of harm or abuse call the police on 000 as a first priority, whether or not you can be in touch with the Director of Professional Standards at the Kooyoora office. The Director can assist you make a report to the police and can give you advice and support to do so. You can call the Kooyoora office of Professional Standards on 1800 135 246 or 03 9416 1008.
10. **Failing to Protect Offence: Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), [s490](#):** A Church worker who knows of a substantial risk of child abuse by someone over 18 years of age associated with the organisation, and has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove that risk and negligently fails to do so, commits a criminal offence under this section, punishable by 5 years imprisonment;
11. When reporting a matter to police, it is important also to report a matter to the Director of Professional Standards. This will ensure that support can be put in place for the parties where appropriate, that all breaches of child safe codes, policies and procedures are appropriately managed, including adhering to all mandatory requirements and other matters of law, and that consideration can be given to suspending the alleged respondent (where necessary to ensure the safety of the complainant and others) while allegations of misconduct are investigated.
12. If uncertain, or seeking further information and direction, the Church worker should contact the Director of Professional Standards. The role of the Director is to assist and guide Church workers and parishes and other ministry bodies in these matters.
13. **Reportable Conduct scheme - Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, Part 5A, [s16M\(4\)](#):** From 1 July 2017 for schools and 1 January 2018 for other religious institutions, Victorian legislation requires that any allegation or complaint of abuse against a child must also be reported by the Head of the entity to the Children and Young Persons' Commissioner. This includes sexual, physical psychological abuse as well as grooming.
14. The Kooyoora Office of Professional Standards has been appointed by the Diocese to report these matters to the Children and Young Persons' Commissioner on its behalf. For this reason, it is essential that Church workers report matters to the Director of Professional Standards, as required by the Professional Standards legislation of the Church.

**B. UNDER CHURCH LAW**

15. **Mandatory reporting:** Our Church statute requires that if a prescribed Church worker believes on reasonable grounds that a person has suffered harm, or is at risk of harm, as a result of misconduct by another Church worker and has no reason to believe that the Director of Professional Standards is aware of those facts, they must as soon as possible report the matter to the Director of Professional Standards at Kooyoora Ltd: s17, Professional Standards legislation. The Archbishop is subject to a similar reporting obligation under the Episcopal Standards legislation of the diocese.
16. Prescribed Church workers are defined in schedule 1 of that Act and include all clergy and lay leaders including Parish Council members.
17. IF IN DOUBT about your reporting requirements, ring Kooyoora and speak to the Director of Professional Standards. Ring the Kooyoora Office on 1800 135 246 or 94161008 for advice, support and assistance or email [dps@kooyoora.org.au](mailto:dps@kooyoora.org.au).
18. **Notification of a criminal charge:** All Church workers including volunteers must comply with the requirement of the Professional Standards legislation, s18 to notify in writing the DPS, giving particulars of the charge. If the Church worker has been charged in any jurisdiction in Australia or elsewhere with a sexual offence, including grooming or an offence relating to child pornography whether committed within or outside the Diocese, that person must forthwith notify in writing the Director, giving particulars of the charge.<sup>2</sup>
19. A failure to comply with an obligation to report is a relevant factor in determining the fitness or otherwise of the Church worker for any role office or position in the Church.

**UPHOLDING THIS CODE OF CONDUCT**

20. If a Church worker knows or have reason to believe that another Church worker has failed to meet a standard of this Code, or has failed to follow a guideline of this Code, without a cogent reason for not doing so, subject to the strict reporting obligations discussed above, the Church worker should, where they believe that a person has not suffered harm or is not at the risk of harm, approach the Church worker and identify the concern. If in doubt seek advice from the Director of Professional Standards without identifying the Church worker.
21. If a Church worker considers that another Church worker has failed to meet a standard of this Code, or has failed to follow a guideline of this Code, without a cogent reason for not doing so, and a person has suffered harm or is at the risk of harm, you must report this to the Director of Professional Standards and to the church authority having responsibility for the Church worker. If in

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<sup>2</sup> Independently of this provision, a Church worker in Victoria who holds a working with children clearance is subject to a statutory obligation under s20 of the *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic) to notify the Secretary to the Department of Justice and the Diocese and Kooyoora Office of Professional Standards of any relevant change in circumstances as defined in that section.

doubt seek advice from the Director of Professional Standards without identifying the Church worker.

22. The Church condemns all forms of child abuse, discrimination and sexual exploitation. We are committed to creating and maintaining an environment which promotes safety for people involved in our programs including all children, people with a disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## STANDARDS – PART 1 - GENERAL

### A. Special responsibility of a Church authority

23. If you have overall authority in a parish or a congregation as the Vicar, Priest in charge or Senior Minister or in the Cathedral as the Dean–
- (a) you must take reasonable steps to ensure that all clergy and church workers for whom you are responsible are made aware of and observe–
    - (i) the standards and guidelines of this Code that Church workers are expected to meet and follow;
    - (ii) their obligations under State law, as described in this Code;
    - (iii) the requirements of the State to obtain a Working with Children card;
    - (iv) the requirements of the Diocese under the Professional Standards legislation to obtain a clearance for ministry or a clearance for service, where applicable;
    - (v) the requirements of the Diocese for regular training in child protection where applicable;
  - (b) you must not permit a member of the clergy to engage in ministry without that person first obtaining a clearance for ministry;
  - (c) you must not appoint a person to a role office or position unless you are satisfied that they are fit to hold the same;
  - (d) you must not permit a lay person to hold or continue to hold a role office or position for which you are responsible if that lay person –
    - (i) has failed to apply for a clearance for service, when formally in writing requested to do so by the Director of Professional Standards<sup>3</sup>, or
    - (ii) has been refused a clearance for service for a role office or position, whether or not prescribed, by the Office of Professional Standards on the direction of the Board or on review, the Review Board under the Professional Standards legislation; or
    - (iii) has had his or her clearance for service cancelled by the Office of Professional Standards on the direction of the Board or on review, the Review Board under the Professional Standards legislation.

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<sup>3</sup> Section 67(1)(a), *Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016*

- (e) you must not penalise, discriminate or take action against other clergy or church workers because of any action taken by them in good faith under this Code.

## **B. Safety and welfare of children**

24. A Church worker must–

- (a) conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the values of the Church, taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and welfare of children in their care
- (b) provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers
- (c) challenge behaviour that is unacceptable or otherwise in breach of the standards and guidelines of this Code
- (d) not exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- (e) not rely on their reputation or that of the organisation to protect them
- (f) comply with all relevant legislation, Federal, State or Church with respect to the safety of children or for mandatory reporting

## **C. Treating children with equality and respect**

25. A Church worker must–

- (a) treat with equality and respect all children and young people, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status
- (b) avoid favouritism or acting in a way that shows unfair and differential treatment of children and young people
- (c) respect cultural differences
- (d) encourage open communication between all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers, and allow children and young people to participate in the decisions that affect them
- (e) be transparent in their actions and whereabouts
- (f) ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory
- (g) encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- (h) recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- (i) avoid doing things of a personal nature that a child can do for him/herself, such as assistance with toileting or changing clothes. If this is necessary, for example for a child with a disability, they must inform their supervisor first and be as open as possible in their behaviour.

## **D. Venue and activities**

26. A Church worker must–



- (a) conduct all child related activities in well lit areas–
  - (i) which are open and can be observed by other adults;
  - (ii) which have doors to rooms or offices left open; and
  - (iii) with no fewer than two adults present at all times during a class, program, rehearsal, event or ministry involving children and young people;
- (b) except where impracticable, avoid being alone with a child in a motor vehicle or driving a child home unaccompanied. If such a situation is unavoidable, inform your ministry supervisor of the trip and the reason for it.
- (c) ensure any contact with children and young people is appropriate and within the parameters of the program or event
- (d) model good conduct in the activities conducted.

## **E. Abusive behaviour**

### 27. A Church worker must NOT–

- (a) engage in behaviour in person or on social media that is intended or likely to bully, shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or young people
- (b) use inappropriate, offensive, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, culturally inappropriate or discriminatory language when speaking with a child or young person
- (c) hit or physically assault or otherwise abuse children
- (d) dispense corporal punishment or discipline to children; for more details, refer to Faithfulness in Service, a National Code of Conduct, paragraph 5.41
- (e) engage in any conduct that constitutes grooming for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16 years, within the meaning of the *Crimes Act 1958*, s49M
- (f) conduct a sexual relationship with a child or young person or indulge in any form of sexual contact with a child or young person
- (g) make available to children or condone the use by children of alcohol or illegal drugs or otherwise condone or participate in behaviour of children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- (h) make comments or gestures to or in front of children or young people that are sarcastic or sexually suggestive
- (i) make comments or gestures to or in front of children or young people that are derogatory, belittling or insensitive and of a personal nature about someone present or known to those present
- (j) otherwise act in a way that is or can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- (k) use any computer, mobile phone, or video and digital camera to exploit or harass children or in a manner that has that effect

**F. Mandatory reporting**

28. A Church worker must–
- (a) report any concerns or suspicions of child abuse by a fellow Church worker, contractor, visitor or other person in accordance with Church and State laws, as referred to above in the Duty to Report section
  - (b) take responsibility for being accountable and not placing oneself in positions where there is a risk of allegations being made. They will ensure that, except where impracticable, another adult is present when working with or near children
  - (c) self-assess their behaviour, actions, language and relationships with children.
  - (d) immediately disclose any information of charges, convictions of abuse which they may incur. This includes disclosing any criminal charges or convictions made against oneself or others.

**G. Inappropriate behaviour**

29. A Church worker must NOT–
- (a) be intoxicated or under the influence of illegal drugs when exercising their role office or position in the Church
  - (b) develop inappropriate relationships with children or young people
  - (c) seek to make contact and spend time alone with any child that they come into contact with in their role in the Church outside of the designated times and activities set for performing that role
  - (d) give children and young people their personal contact details (mobile number, email or address) other than on the expressed basis that communication must be for the stated purposes of the approved curriculum, program or activities and not for personal purposes
  - (e) make inappropriate promises to children and young people, particularly in relation to confidentiality

**H. Privacy and confidentiality**

30. A Church worker must –
- (a) keep confidential all information regarding any child protection concern or complaint, only discussing information with relevant and appropriate people including the Office of Professional Standards
  - (b) not release or discuss any personal confidential information about suspected or proven child abuse or cases involving the Office of Professional Standards except as authorized by the Professional Standards legislation of the Diocese or any protocol made under that legislation
  - (c) not take or publish a photo of a child without their parents' consent in the form contained in the parish duty of care handbook published by the Diocese or a form substantially to like effect.

**PART 1 – GUIDELINES****WHAT SHOULD LEADERS DO IF YOUTH ARE ATTEMPTING TO DEVELOP A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH A LEADER?**

31. You should inform the Children's and/or Youth Ministers immediately, even if the interaction may only have been misconstrued by the leader. Whenever suspicion arises, inform the Children and/or Youth Minister or other ministry supervisor, and proceed with caution.
32. Where interactions are a clear attempt by the youth to develop a close relationship, the leader should cease online or other one to one communication. It should be made clear to the youth or child in question as soon as possible that this change is not because of a change in their relationship or standing with the leader - all effort should be made to explain that this change is not a rejection of the youth or child - rather the change is because the level of interaction has become inappropriate. A relationship with a leader of the type the youth is seeking is not an option, but this does not mean that the leader does not or no longer cares about the youth / child. Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the youth and consult with your supervisor as to the appropriate level of future interaction.
33. Leaders should always be cautious and thoughtful about the type and level of interaction they have with youth, both on and offline. Prevention of situations where leaders' words or actions could easily be misconstrued by youth is paramount. If necessary, boundaries of appropriate interaction between leaders and youth should be clearly stated early-on in order to avoid misunderstanding later. This is especially important for relationships between leaders and youth of different genders.

**ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS**

34. The following is a list of behaviour which is to be encouraged or avoided, as the case may be. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all acceptable / unacceptable behaviour, but rather to provide examples:

**ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

- (a) Taking all practicable steps to protect children from abuse and upholding the Church's commitment to the highest standards of child safety at all times
- (b) Promoting the safety, dignity, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, Children with a disability and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- (c) Not unlawfully discriminating against children for their age, gender, race or sexuality
- (d) Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations listening and responding immediately to the concerns or allegations
- (e) Reporting any child safety concerns to the ministry supervisor, the child safety officer or the Director of Professional Standards before

- any suspected, alleged or actual child abuse is reported to the authorities unless a child is in immediate danger
- (f) Using positive reinforcement and avoiding abusive, harassing or discriminatory language
  - (g) Avoiding, where possible, situations where an adult may be alone with a child, such as in a dressing or change room, or when a child needs to be transported in a vehicle
  - (h) Not developing any 'special' relationships with children, which could be seen as grooming, favouritism, or misconstrued as unnecessarily physical

### UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

- (i) Ignoring or disregarding any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- (j) Developing any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism, for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children
- (k) Engaging in any type of sexual activity with children under 18
- (l) Exhibiting behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical, for example inappropriate touching or sitting on laps
- (m) Putting children at risk of abuse, for example, by locking doors
- (n) Offering alcohol or illegal drugs to children under the age of 18
- (o) Initiating unnecessary physical contact which children or doing things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- (p) Engaging in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children, for example, personal social activities on a topic not the subject of the approved curriculum, program or activities
- (q) Using inappropriate language in the presence of children, including swearing
- (r) Expressing personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- (s) Discriminating against any child because of age, race, religion, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or disability
- (t) Having contact with a child/children outside of Church activities without the consent of parents/guardians Unintended contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate
- (u) Photographing or videoing a child without the consent of the parent or guardians

### CREATING A POSITIVE CULTURE

35. We know that children and young people flourish when a positive culture is created that builds their social, emotional and physical development and ensures their safety.

36. A Church worker must promote a positive culture that enhances children's and young person's safety by:
- (a) treating everyone with respect;
  - (b) listening, taking seriously, and responding to the concerns of a child, particularly if the child is complaining or worried about the safety, abuse or harm to themselves or another child;
  - (c) promoting a culture of safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children, for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification;
  - (d) promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds by having a zero tolerance of discrimination, for example, not ridiculing culturally different family practices;
  - (e) promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability, for example, during personal care activities and showing tolerance during activities including worship services;
  - (f) ensuring that children and young persons know whom to tell and how and from where to seek help when they feel unsafe; and
  - (g) developing a culture where children and young people can talk openly about their interactions with adults and others and have the confidence to raise safety concerns.

#### FIRST AID

37. A Church worker who is organizing or assisting in an activity should observe the following—
- (a) Ensure that there is a risk management plan which includes relevant contact details (e.g. emergency services and specialised help) and that a first aid kit appropriate to the activity is available. In the case of camps and similar activities, ensure that at least one adult present has first aid training.
  - (b) Do not administer prescription medications to a child without the written consent of a parent or guardian.
  - (c) Obtain information from parents or guardians about the particular physical and mental health or safety needs of children in your care (e.g. allergies, depression).

#### PHYSICAL CONTACT

38. In general, except in circumstances such as immediate physical danger or medical emergency, a Church worker should not initiate physical contact with a child. If that contact is initiated by the child, be very careful that you respect the child's feelings and privacy.
39. A Church worker should ensure that any physical contact they have with children is of a non-sexual nature and appropriate to the situation. Avoid any physical contact that is sexually stimulating, or that may be construed as sexually stimulating. Children may or may not be aware of creating such

situations. It is your responsibility to be alert for such situations and to cease any inappropriate physical contact immediately. For more details, refer to *Faithfulness in Service, a National Code of Conduct*, paragraph 5.44.

## **GUIDELINES FOR OVERNIGHT STAYS, BILLETS and CHOIRS**

40. When supervising children and young people within a choir context or a trip excursion, children's safety is the primary focus of all decision making. The following guidelines apply:
- (a) A Safety officer must be nominated on each trip, or for the choir, and needs to be easily identifiable by children and other adults;
  - (b) The Safety Officer must identify themselves to the choir, or to the group prior to the excursion commencing and should be nominated as part of the pre-trip information and or briefings to children and parents;
  - (c) The Safety Officer must brief children and young people prior to the excursion / trip as to any procedures which must be followed to reduce risk of harm – For instance bathroom and or change room arrangements and configuration – e.g. if there is only one toilet for both adults and children what is the proposed procedure for the children to go to the bathroom to reduce risk of harm.
  - (d) The safety officer must also ensure on overnight stays that children under 18 years stay with children of their own age and adults are housed in a separate room.
  - (e) The Safety Officer is to remind children to tell them or a trusted adult if for any reason they or another child feel unsafe; the officer should invite them to talk to them or to another trusted adult whilst on the excursion or afterwards.
  - (f) The Safety Officer needs to report any issues raised on a trip, to the Office of Professional Standards in accordance with paragraph 15 above, or as part of the Church's continuous improvement process to enhance safety.

## **VENUE AND BOUNDARIES AROUND SUPERVISION**

41. To ensure children and young people feel confident and safe at any authorised Church activity whether at the church or away, the Church worker leading the activity and those supporting that leader must ensure that–
- (a) All child related activities should take place in well lit areas which are open and can be observed by others;
  - (b) All adults need to be visible to other adults when working with children and young people so their interaction can be open and observable;
  - (c) Doors to rooms or offices should be left open;
  - (d) Where privacy is required, rooms with clear glass panels should be

- used so that the interaction and conduct is observable by others;
- (e) No fewer than two adults should be present at all times during a class, program, rehearsal, event or ministry involving children and young people; these adults ideally should not be related; and
  - (f) Supervision of the children and young people should be age appropriate and not compromise young people's privacy.

## VISITING ANGLICAN OR OTHER DENOMINATION'S CHURCHES / PREMISES

42. When visiting Churches or places of the Christian or other faith:
- (a) The adult in charge should be informed and sight the Child Safe Statement of Commitment and Code of Conduct from the other Church or faith institution; if none is sighted or what is sighted is clearly inadequate, the adult in charge should inform their supervisor;
  - (b) Children and young people should not be left alone by staff or volunteers accompanying the children when visiting such places;
  - (c) If there is any intention to leave children and young people in the care of staff, clergy or volunteers of any other denomination or organisation then the adult in charge must be satisfied that all such staff have current and valid Working with Children Cards;
  - (d) Children and young people must know who the designated Safety Officer is on the visit;
  - (e) On return from the trip/ excursion/ visit, the nominated leader must complete an incident report if any issues were raised by children or if the leader has concerns themselves about inappropriate behaviour of others or issues which raised potential risks and need to be addressed in the future.
43. If any complaints are made or concerns raised, the Safety Officer must:
- (a) ensure any allegation is reported to the police or child protection in accordance with the obligations to report as set out above; and
  - (b) report any child safety concerns to the Director of Professional Standards and their supervisor.

If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child is safe.

## PART 2 - ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

### INTRODUCTION

44. General communication is an integral part of youth and children's ministry and something that is to be encouraged in ministry. Pastoral care for youth and children will be primarily through face to face contact, but increasingly communication will utilise social media.
45. As a general policy, the Church aims to embrace the opportunities provided

by social media, but avoiding inappropriate or unwise behaviour. In particular, this part focuses on on-line interactions with people under 18 years of age.

## DEFINITION OF 'YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S INFLUENCERS'

46. Official youth and children's leaders are not the only people who deal with young people in the church community. While they perhaps come into contact with young people on a more regular basis than others, through the programs and gatherings of the Church, there is a wider sphere of people who also need to communicate with young people. The term "youth and children influencers", therefore, includes, but is not limited to, those who interact on a regular basis with young people (under 18) through youth group, small groups, one-on-one discipleship, music teams, services, children's ministry and any other interactions that may take place under the umbrella of the Church.

## RATIONALE

47. The Church sees the need for this Code to address on line communication because:
- (a) some forms of communication are illegal or dangerous for youth influencers to be using with young people;
  - (b) youth and children's influencers are looked up to by young people and the way they use electronic communication tools can have an impact on young people;
  - (c) youth and children's influencers need to actively promote a safe environment for young people as well as protecting themselves and the organisation/s that they represent; and
  - (d) information in emails, or posted on the internet or sent in text or video messages can be reproduced and used in ways that were not originally intended.

These issues are further discussed in the Parish Duty of Care Handbook published by the Diocese.

The following standards and guidelines establish appropriate boundaries when using e- communications with children and youth.

## PART 2 - ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION - STANDARDS

### A. General

48. Youth and Children's leaders must inform, by way of sending them a copy, the Children and Youth Ministers or if there is no one holding that position, in the case of the Cathedral, the Dean and in the case of a parish or congregation, the Vicar or Senior Minister (and each other, where appropriate) of all online interactions, ongoing and one-off, leader-initiated and youth-initiated that they have with youth or children.
49. Youth and Children's leaders must inform parents/guardians of any form of ongoing communication leaders have (on and offline) with youth and children outside of face-to-face interactions at church, youth group, children's



programs, and similar situations.

50. Online communication must never be the default or preferable means of communicating with youth and children, particularly about anything of a sensitive or personal nature – such interactions should take place offline in a face to face or telephone interaction. Even if initiated by youth, lengthy interactions should be moved offline as soon as possible.
51. A Church worker must never initiate a private conversation online with youth and children, and if it happens, it should always occur with at least one other leader as part of the conversation. Such interactions should never be substituted for offline interaction, and should never be used to discuss matters of a personal or sensitive nature.
52. If a private conversation is initiated by a youth or child with a leader, beyond that of a brief and simple update (e.g. “I’m running 10 mins late”) the leader must:
  - (a) continue the conversation only in an offline form (appropriate phone call, face-to-face meeting), if this is impossible, the leader should not meaningfully continue the interaction until after having consulted with the Children’s or Youth Ministers or other supervisor.
  - (b) inform the Children’s or Youth Ministers or other supervisor that the interaction has taken place, keeping a copy of the conversation in full for reference.
53. Youth and children’s leaders and influencers must:
  - (a) be courteous and engage in respectful interactions
  - (b) be knowledgeable about and practice privacy principles
  - (c) be knowledgeable about and take care in social networking
  - (d) not knowingly transmit, retrieve or store any communication that is discriminatory, harassing, derogatory, obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic, defamatory or threatening
  - (e) consider if electronic communication is the best medium for a communication
  - (f) not use electronic communication for any form of rebuke
  - (g) be mindful that any post may be perceived by the reader as the voice of the Church and opinions given may be thought of as coming from the church, or as church policy or the Senior Minister’s opinion
  - (h) inform their supervisor if emails or other communications are received of a very personal nature
  - (i) not send any electronic communication that attempts to hide their identity or represent oneself as someone else
  - (j) must not engage in video online communications or, except for short formal calls, voice online or telephone communications.

## **B. Telephone**

54. Youth and children’s leaders and influencers must NOT:

- (a) seek phone contact details of minors except for ministry purposes, nor should they give out their own details, except for ministry purposes
- (b) contact minors via the phone except for the stated purposes of the approved curriculum, program or activities
- (c) engage in video chats with youth and younger children
- (d) fail to inform parents and guardians of any leaders that have contact details for the minors in their care, and the expectations and limitations of interaction with minors by phone should be made explicit
- (e) fail to ensure that a parent of the young person is aware of the phone call, unless special circumstances prevent this information being given.

### C. Email

55. Youth and children's leaders and influencers must:

- (a) ensure that all emails to young people have at least one other youth or children's influencer cc'd into them or cc'd to a storage email account that is accessible by the Youth and Children's Ministers or other ministry supervisor (e.g. a gmail account) for future reference if required
- (b) restrict emails to purpose only emails (e.g. event details), except in special circumstances; and
- (c) as far as possible save all emails to and from young people and children.

### D. SMS, WHATSAPP and like communications

56. Youth and children leaders and influencers must record or save text messages that are sent and received from young people that have a level of depth or seriousness that goes beyond simple sharing of information (e.g. "We're meeting here"). This should include the content, the time, the date and the recipient and sender. The supervisor should be made a party to the communications by way of a copy.

### E. Facebook

57. Numerous social media tools are now widely used. Listed below are main social media tools that young people use at the time of writing. The **recommendations** for youth and children's influencers and leaders given in the "Facebook" section would apply equally to the majority of other social media sites.

58. Youth and children's leaders and influencers are expected to follow the following guidelines:

- (a) Set an example of good behaviour, in verbal and visual form.
- (b) Posting written comments, photos, or videos of a personal nature should be done with the utmost care. Thinking through how comments, photos, or videos may be seen by other people is a valuable habit.
- (c) Posting on other people's profiles should be general and kept to a

minimum, particularly with young people. It is best to keep conversations public so other people can see what's going on.

- (d) Comments, whether on their profile or in comments, are not to be crude or rude and are to be done in a way that will not be misconstrued by a third-party viewing them.
- (e) Be conscious of what you write and how others may interpret it. Sarcasm, irony, and jokes can seem funny but can be misinterpreted by others.
- (f) Do not write negatively about other people or organisations.
- (g) Do not publicly express anger, bitter disappointment and other heated emotions when posting.
- (h) Keep a close eye on the ever-changing privacy settings.
- (i) You should maximize your privacy as much as is practical. Make sure that the people who need to see your posts are only the people who actually see them.

### YOUTH SPECIFIC

- (j) Youth leaders should not 'friend' minors on social media, and should not respond to friendship requests from minors from within the church community or contacts.
- (k) Youth leaders will not initiate conversations at-length online, especially not conversations of a personal or sensitive nature. Online interactions are to be practical purposes and light-hearted, public communication; overall the involvement of the leader in the youth's online activities is to be minimal.
- (l) All youth influencers should be very careful with whom they interact and what is visible on their profile.
- (m) Private messages should be purpose-only messages, but if they go beyond this, another youth influencer should be in the conversation. Do not post any private details of a young person on any other "wall", "profile" or "event". Please check with other youth influencers if they are happy for their details to be published in an open forum.
- (n) Be careful what is posted and consider the ways in which it can be misinterpreted.
- (o) Ensure that care is taken when 'following' others.
- (p) Do not post negative comments about people or organisations.

### F. Instant messaging (MSN, FB CHAT, SNAPCHAT, GOOGLE CHAT, INSTAGRAM, Wechat ETC.)

- (q) All youth influencers are to avoid online personal chat with a young person where possible. It is preferable to move the conversation to another form.
- (r) If a youth influencer and a young person use instant messaging make sure that the conversation is recorded or saved.
- (s) If a conversation is occurring in an instant messaging application then invite a third person to join the conversation or create a new message thread to include the third person.

**G. Video Chat (Mobile Phone or internet)**

59. Video chat can include, but is not limited to, Facetime, Google Chat, Skype or any other applications that allow personal conversation via video form. Youth influencers must not enter into any conversations of this nature with a youth or child.

**PART 2 - ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION - GUIDELINES****ONLINE BEHAVIOURS EXPECTED FROM YOUTH**

60. Youth and children's leaders should make clear to those in their charge their expectations of the nature of any online interaction with the leaders. Such expectations should include:
- (a) Youth should not expect or seek a particularly deep or active online relationship with a leader.
  - (b) Youth should not seek to communicate at-length with a leader in an online setting: long conversations, especially those of a personal or sensitive nature are always best to be had in another form.
  - (c) Youth should not seek to embarrass, defame, or implicate the leader by online means in any inappropriate or illegal activity. Youth and leaders are always to be respectful of one another online.
  - (d) Youth should be aware that posts and interactions they make online may be seen by leaders, who then may have a responsibility to report them or take other action as a result.
  - (e) Social media friendship should not be taken as a sign of particular preference or special relationship between youth and leaders. It is inappropriate for youth to seek such relationships with leaders.

**REPORTING ONLINE BEHAVIOUR OF CONCERN**

61. If information that discloses a failure by a Church worker or a child or youth to whom a Church worker ministers to adhere to the standards and guidelines of this Code is encountered, then advice from the Children and Youth Ministers or other supervisor must be sought. If a leader encounters information that requires immediate attention (i.e. the youth(s) are at immediate risk of coming to harm), the leader must report the matter to the supervisor and if required, as mandatory reporting to the Director of Professional Standards. Where appropriate, leaders should also inform the parents/ guardians.

**GAMING CONSOLES**

62. Xbox, PlayStation and other gaming consoles (including computers) have games that allow communication across the Internet usually through text and voice chat:
- (a) Youth influencers should avoid 'chatting' to others playing the same game as they are, particularly if a known young person is also playing the game.
  - (b) Do not initiate chat to those you know or reasonably suspect to be young people within the game.

- (c) Make sure that the parents know that their children are playing a game across the Internet with a 'youth influencer'. At all times obey and follow the parents' instructions.

### REVIEW OF THIS CODE

- 63. The Archbishop in Council of the Diocese will review this Code of Conduct no later than the third anniversary of its making and for that purpose and prior to that review will invite parishes, congregations, the Cathedral and other stakeholders to give feedback on its operation.

## Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

### Code of Conduct for Child Safety

#### STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

I acknowledge that I hold the following roles offices or position as a Church worker in the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Melbourne:

...  
...  
...

I have read, understood and agree to be bound by the attached Code of Conduct for Child Safety and to observe the standards and, unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so, follow the guidelines set out above.

I acknowledge that the Church expects me to uphold at all times the standards of behaviour described in the Code of Conduct and, to follow the guidelines there stated.

I also understand that as a Church worker, I am accountable under the Professional Standards legislation of the Diocese and otherwise for any failure on my part to uphold the standards and follow the guidelines of the Code.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date

Witness Name \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature \_\_\_\_\_