

Safe Ministry Policy

June 2017

Rouse Hill Anglican Church is committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people. We are committed to ensuring the safety of children, youth and vulnerable people in our community.

All our paid and volunteer church workers involved with children or youth are subject to:

- a. Holding a *Working With Children Check (WWCC)* clearance which has been verified by Rouse Hill Anglican Church with the NSW Government, Office of the Children's Guardian; and
- b. Complying with:
 - i. The Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney's Safe Ministry protocols, including undertaking ongoing training;
 - ii. The national Anglican code of conduct, *Faithfulness in Service*; and
 - iii. The specific policies and procedures outlined in this document.

We have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse or sexual misconduct:

- a. If we suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is at risk of neglect or physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse, or if there is evidence or disclosure of sexual misconduct or child abuse, we will report this to the relevant Anglican and civil authorities (including the Department of Family and Community Services, and for criminal behaviour, to the Police).
- b. Any paid or voluntary church worker accused of child abuse or sexual misconduct will be immediately suspended from all access to children or youth until the appropriate investigation process is concluded.
- c. No person known to have been guilty of past child abuse or sexual misconduct will be appointed to, or allowed to continue in, any position providing access to children or youth.

To ensure the safety of children and vulnerable people in our communities, Rouse Hill Anglican Church in conjunction with the Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney, will:

- a. Carefully recruit and train its clergy and church workers;
- b. Adopt and encourage safe ministry practices by its clergy and church workers;
- c. Respond promptly to each concern raised about the behaviour of its clergy and church workers;
- d. Offer pastoral support to any person who has suffered abuse; and
- e. Provide supervision of and pastoral accountability (within the context of the ministries, locations and activities of the parish) to any person (who is a member of a congregation and) who is known to have abused a child or another vulnerable person.

Further information on the Safe Ministry Policy of the Anglican Church, Diocese of Sydney can be found at safeministry.org.au

Safe Ministry: Reporting Policies

A. Concerning clergy and church workers

Should anyone have knowledge of, or reasonable suspicion of, abuse or other misconduct by a member of the clergy or other church worker, please report it to the Director of the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) of the Diocese of Sydney, by one of the following methods:

Abuse Report Line: 1800 774 945

Email to: abusereport@sydney.anglican.asn.au

Online at: <http://safeministry.org.au/report/>

Should any church office holder have knowledge of, or reasonable suspicion that a child who attends or has attended any activity of the church has suffered child abuse or is at the risk of harm of child abuse from a church office holder he/she has a duty to report it.

B. Concerning children or young persons at risk

Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that there is a child or young person currently at risk of harm because of:

- physical or sexual abuse or ill-treatment or neglect (basic physical or psychological needs not being met); or
- the parent or caregiver not arranging and are unable or unwilling to arrange necessary medical care; or
- the parent or other caregiver has behaved in such a way towards the child or young person that the child or young person has suffered or is at risk of suffering serious psychological harm; or
- the child or young person is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and, as a consequence, the child or young person is at risk of serious physical or psychological harm;

paid workers of Rouse Hill Anglican Church have a legal obligation to report the name of the child to the Department of Family and Community Services.

Our church also supports and encourages voluntary reporting by all clergy and church workers in such situations.

Safe Ministry: Specific Policies

June 2017

This document outlines the specific policies we implement in order to ensure that our clergy and church workers practice “safe ministry” with children and youth. It should be read in conjunction with the *Safe Ministry Map* published at safeministry.org.au and with the *Faithfulness in Service* booklet.

It is the responsibility of the ministry leader to ensure the compliance of their teams with these requirements. The ministry leader is encouraged to consult with our church’s Safe Ministry Representative for clarification about any aspect of this policy.

Except where a particular age bracket is indicated, or a distinction is drawn between children and youth, references to children in this document are references to anyone under the age of 18.

A **children’s ministry position** means any paid or unpaid position to which a person is appointed by or on behalf of the senior minister or the wardens that involves activities primarily related to, and physical or face-to-face contact with, children. Because a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18, a children’s ministry position includes youth ministry roles. Examples of children’s ministry positions include crèche leaders, Kids Church leaders and youth group leaders.

All persons who wish to volunteer or work in a children’s ministry position, must:

1. Obtain a WWCC clearance that must then be verified by the parish:

- a. Before the commencement of a children’s ministry position, apply for a WWCC online at www.service.nsw.gov.au and have their identity checked at a NSW Government Roads and Maritime Service (RMS) office, and notify the church Safe Ministry Representative by completing the paper or online form available at <http://rhac.org.au/wwcc/>
- b. Workers who already hold a WWCC possibly related to another role or employer must also complete the paper or online form available at <http://rhac.org.au/wwcc/> for notification to the Safe Ministry Representative before commencement of a children’s ministry position.

Who is exempt from needing a WWCC?

If a person is in child-related work but qualifies for one of the following exemptions, that person will not need a WWCC:

- a. Workers under the age of 18 (a person’s date of birth should be verified from a reliable source of data, such as a birth certificate or passport) but immediately upon turning 18 they must obtain a WWCC clearance as outlined above,
- b. A visiting speaker or performer for a one-off occasion who will be in the presence of one or more adults,
- c. Short-term emergencies where the engagement of the worker is necessary in the circumstances to prevent an increased risk to the safety of children and the engagement is not for more than five consecutive working days. (This exemption could be relied upon in a situation where a regular volunteer gives late notice that they are unwell or otherwise unavailable, and it would jeopardise the safety of the children concerned to run the activity without having another leader or leaders present. The parish cannot rely on the same person on more than five occasions. Any instance of engaging a worker under these circumstances must be notified to the Safe Ministry Representative within 48 hours of engagement.)

2. Complete Sydney Anglican Diocese Safe Ministry Training:

- a. Within 3 months of appointment to a ministry position, complete the required *Safe Ministry Training Essentials* course (or if the person is a leader under the age of 16 they must instead complete the *Safe Ministry Junior Leader* training, followed by the *Essentials* training course as soon as practical following turning 16 years of age).
- b. To maintain safe ministry accreditation, every 3 years each person must complete a *Safe Ministry Training Refresher* course. If that person fails to complete a *Refresher* course within 30 days of their three year expiry, they must complete the *Essentials* training once again in order to obtain currency.
- c. *Safe Ministry Training Essentials*, *Safe Ministry Training Refresher* and *Safe Ministry Junior Leader* training must be undertaken by either: our church's inhouse Safe Ministry Trainer, online, another Anglican Church within the Diocese of Sydney, Youthworks or Moore College. If training has been undertaken online or somewhere other than Rouse Hill Anglican Church, the Safe Ministry Representative must sight the certificate obtained and verify that the person's training is considered current.
- d. If after 3 months of appointment, the person has not satisfied the requirements for their Safe Ministry Training accreditation, without just cause (as determined by the Senior Minister), their appointment will be revoked.

Who is exempt from needing Safe Ministry training?

There is no need to insist on completion of Safe Ministry training for every person who helps out in a children's ministry position from time to time. Examples of people who would not ordinarily be expected to undergo training include:

- a. A teenager who helps the adult leaders of a primary school-age children's program for a week in the school holidays as a one-off,
- b. Casual helpers who assist from time to time and do not fulfil a leadership or teaching role in a children's program, and
- c. Other volunteers who help out with programs for infants and young children (such as playgroups) but who have no program responsibility or teaching role.

3. Make a formal application and abide by *Faithfulness in Service*:

A person who wishes to volunteer or work in a children's ministry position must:

- a. Make a formal application for the children's ministry position using the form provided by the parish, including producing proof of identity documents and providing references; and
- b. Read, understand, and comply with *Faithfulness in Service* (available at www.safeministry.org.au).

Who is exempt from the need to make a formal application and read *Faithfulness in Service*?

- a. A visiting speaker or performer for a one-off occasion in the presence of other adults,
- b. Volunteers serving food, wardens, Parish Councillors, Synod representatives, building caretakers, cleaners, administrators and bookkeepers,
- c. Members of the church staff ministry team (since staff will have already completed a formal application for their ministry role and will have already undertaken to read and abide by *Faithfulness in Service*),
- d. Volunteers assisting in an emergency,
- e. Rouse About helpers (as distinct from Rouse About leaders or coordinators),

- f. At the discretion of the Senior Minister:
 - i. Crèche helpers (as distinct from crèche leaders or coordinators);
 - ii. Volunteers in children’s ministry under the age of 18;
 - iii. Parents or close relatives of a child or youth, volunteering in a ministry group that their child is a member of or usually participates in;
 - iv. Casual helpers who do not fulfil a leadership or teaching role in a children’s or youth program and simply assist from time to time, where they are well known to the church leadership (which would generally, but not always, mean that they have been part of our church for at least 3 years).

Clarifying Requirements for Specific Situations

Experience has shown that some clarification is required for specific ministries. The principles are:

1. When access to, or involvement with, children is direct and regular, the person is a “church worker” and subject to the full requirements set down above. This also applies for anyone involved with a residential camp.
2. When involvement is indirect (eg. catering for a kids club) or direct but occasional (eg. an adult runs a one-off activity at a kids club), only the WWCC check is required.
3. If the involvement is occasional and only for support (eg. provide morning tea at a kids club) there are no formal safe ministry requirements.
4. In all cases church staff and others who lead entire ministries must know, trust and appoint each person who will have any access to, or involvement with, children or youth.

The above principles apply to specific ministries as follows:

For Residential Camps

1. Everyone who serves at a residential camp (including cooks and other helpers) must complete all the requirements as listed under the heading above for *All persons who wish to volunteer or work in a children’s ministry position.*

For Holiday Clubs (and other one-off) events:

1. Those who are regular leaders of children or youth, and serve in Holiday Clubs must complete all the requirements as listed under the heading above for *All persons who wish to volunteer or work in a children’s ministry position.*
2. Casual helpers who do not fulfil a leadership or teaching role and simply assist from time to time, require a WWCC but not Safe Ministry Training, and their assistance is subject to the Senior Minister approving their involvement on the basis that they are well known to church leadership.
3. Those who assist only with catering or other logistics on an occasional basis need only to be known, trusted and appointed by the relevant staff member.

For Rouse About:

1. Those who co-ordinate or lead children at Rouse About (i.e. those who take regular responsibility for the children of others) must complete all the requirements as listed under the heading above for *All persons who wish to volunteer or work in a children’s ministry position.*
2. Parents who simply attend Rouse About with their own child/children have no safe ministry requirements.
3. Rouse About helpers who do not fulfil a leadership or teaching role and simply assist from time to time, require a WWCC but not Safe Ministry Training.

For Crèche, Kids Church and JFTs:

1. Those who serve in Crèche, Kids Church or JFTs on a regular basis (ie. they are rostered to do so) must complete all the requirements as listed under the heading above for *All persons who wish to volunteer or work in a children's ministry position*.
2. Parents who accompany their own children to Crèche or Kids Church, but have no formal responsibility for the children of others as a rostered leader or helper, have no safe ministry requirements, however, should their continued attendance involve regular assistance to other children then they must complete all the requirements as listed under the heading above for *All persons who wish to volunteer or work in a children's ministry position*.
3. Casual helpers who do not fulfil a leadership or teaching role and simply assist from time to time, require a WWCC but not Safe Ministry Training, and their assistance is subject to the Senior Minister approving their involvement on the basis that they are well known to church leadership.
4. Volunteers assisting in an emergency, where the engagement of the worker is necessary in the circumstances to prevent an increased risk to the safety of children (e.g. a regular volunteer gives late notice that they are unwell or otherwise unavailable), have no safe ministry requirements, however, use of emergency volunteers must be notified to the Safe Ministry Representative within 48 hours, and there are limits (outlined above) on how many times and for what durations a person can assist in this capacity.

For SRE (Scripture) Teachers

A. Every member of Rouse Hill Anglican Church who enters school classrooms to teach SRE must:

1. Hold a current *Working with Children Check* – before commencing teaching, provide details of the WWCC to the Rouse Hill Anglican Church Safe Ministry Representative for verification.
2. Undertake *Safe Ministry Training* as would be the case for in-house programs at Rouse Hill Anglican Church.
3. Anglican *SRE Authorisation Card* – Complete an SRE Engagement Form and return it to the SRE Coordinator, and be issued with an SRE Authorisation Card, signed by the Senior Minister. This is to be carried and available on request whenever the person enters a school to teach SRE.
4. SRE Accreditation - Commit to undertake and then complete the *Youthworks SRE Accreditation Training*. There are five, two hour modules, which must be completed within 6 months.

B. Non-Rouse Hill Anglican Scripture Teachers who enter school classrooms to teach Scripture, do so under the co-ordination of Rouse Hill Anglican Church. Each person must:

1. Hold a current *Working with Children Check* – before commencing teaching, provide details of the WWCC to the Rouse Hill Anglican Church Safe Ministry Representative for verification.
2. SRE Accreditation – As for Rouse Hill Anglican members, commit to undertake and then complete the *Youthworks SRE Accreditation Training*.
3. Obtain, and present to the SRE Coordinator, an *SRE Authorisation Card* from their own church/denominational (assuming they are an Accredited SRE Provider). This is evidence that the person is known, trusted and has completed all relevant safe ministry training for their own church. (Note: In some cases where the person is not able to obtain an SRE Accreditation from their own church, they can be authorised by Rouse Hill Anglican Church upon completion of the *Safe Ministry Training* and presentation of a letter of recommendation from their church minister).

Safe Ministry: Roles & Responsibilities

June 2017

Senior Minister

The senior minister is ultimately responsible for making sure ministry conducted throughout the parish is safe for children and young people. In order to faithfully execute his responsibilities with regard to safe ministry the senior minister needs to:

- a. COMPLETE TRAINING – The senior minister must complete Safe Ministry training at the required intervals.
- b. IMPLEMENT and APPOINT – The senior minister must implement the Safe Ministry Policy and appoint a Safe Ministry Representative.
- c. COMPLY – The senior minister must make sure the parish complies with its obligations under the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)*.
- d. MEET – The senior minister must meet regularly with the Safe Ministry Representative on at least an annual basis to review the implementation of the safe ministry policies in the church.
- e. MONITOR – The senior minister (with the Safe Ministry Representative and Parish Council) must monitor all basic health and safety issues in order to avoid obvious hazards on church property, particularly in rooms used by infants, pre-schoolers and primary age children.
- f. REPORT – Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm, the senior minister must report his suspicions to the appropriate authorities.
- g. FULFIL – The senior minister must fulfil such other responsibilities as are required by chapter 5 of *Faithfulness in Service* in relation to standards for personal behaviour, the practice of pastoral ministry and ensuring the safety of children in all areas of parish life. Faithfulness in Service is available at safeministry.org.au

Safe Ministry Representative

The senior minister is required to appoint a Safe Ministry Representative (with the agreement of Parish Council). Although the ultimate responsibility for safe ministry lies with the senior minister, he can delegate the day-to-day work of ensuring compliance with legal and Diocesan requirements to the Safe Ministry Representative. The responsibilities of the Safe Ministry Representative are to:

- a. ASSIST THE SENIOR MINISTER to comply with the child protection screening requirements,
- b. KEEP RECORDS of *Working With Children Checks* and *Safe Ministry Training*,
- c. MONITOR AND REPORT on safe ministry systems and practices in the parish, and
- d. REPORT ANY ABUSE.

Paid Church Workers

The responsibilities of Paid Church Workers are to:

- a. COMPLY with this Safe Ministry Policy, and work with the Senior Minister and Safe Ministry Representative to ensure that ministry to children and young people takes place safely,
- b. ENSURE that any person who currently holds or is to hold a **children's ministry position** within a ministry that they lead, have received approval from the Safe Ministry Representative prior to commencement within that children's ministry position,
- c. ENCOURAGE members within their ministry to stay familiar with Safe Ministry matters and requirements, and
- d. REPORT: Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm, paid church workers must report their suspicions to the appropriate authorities.

Unpaid Children's Ministry Leaders

The responsibilities of Unpaid Children's Ministry Leaders are to:

- a. COMPLY with this Safe Ministry Policy, and work with the Senior Minister and Safe Ministry Representative to ensure that ministry to children and young people takes place safely,
- b. ENSURE that any person who currently holds or is to hold a **children's ministry position** within a ministry that they lead, have received approval from the Safe Ministry Representative prior to commencement within that children's ministry position,
- c. ENCOURAGE members within their ministry to stay familiar with Safe Ministry matters and requirements.

People Who Prepare Rosters

The responsibilities of People Who Prepare Rosters are to:

- a. ENSURE that only people that have been cleared by the relevant Ministry Leader are included in the rosters of any **children's ministry positions**.

Parish Council

The responsibilities of Parish Council are to:

- a. SUPPORT the Senior Minister and Safe Ministry Representative in the implementation of and adherence to the Safe Ministry Policy.