

1. Purpose

Newcastle Anglican (the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle) is committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable people who participate in our programs and ministries have a safe and rewarding experience.

Newcastle Anglican parishes support the active participation of children and vulnerable people in a wide range of activities including church services, messy church, music programs, play groups, youth groups, children’s events, study and support groups.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the following Newcastle Anglican agencies:

Newcastle Anglican Churches (Ministry)	Samaritans	Anglican Care	Newcastle Anglican Schools	Newcastle Anglican Corporate
✓	✗	✗	✗	✗

This Policy applies to all clergy, Church Workers, contractors, and office holders associated with parishes in the Diocese of Newcastle.

This policy has been adopted as a Work Health and Safety Policy of the Diocese consequently clergy are required to observe it as a condition of any licence or authority (in accordance with the Clerical Ministry Ordinance 2009) and must be observed by parish officers, church workers and other ministers (in accordance with the Administration of Parishes Ordinance 2010).

This Policy should be read in conjunction with all Work, Health and Safety requirements for parishes.

3. Principles

Newcastle Anglican (the Diocese of Newcastle) will:

1. communicate its commitment to the safety of children and vulnerable people;
2. carefully recruit and train its clergy and church workers;
3. adopt and encourage safe ministry practices by its clergy and church workers;
4. ensure that children, young people, clergy, church workers, staff, volunteers and parishioners are supported and respected;
5. respond promptly and in a trauma informed manner to each concern raised about the behaviour of its clergy and church workers;
6. provide supervision and pastoral accountability (within the context of the ministries, locations and activities of the parish) of any person (who is a member of a congregation and) who is known to have abused a child or another vulnerable person;
7. promote children’s participation in our parishes and Diocese and make it safer for them;
8. ensure effective governance around safety; and
9. comply with legislation relating to protecting children.

4. Definitions

Children means every person under the age of 18.

Church Worker means a person as defined as a Church Worker in Faithfulness in Service

Governance Body mean the Diocesan Council, the Board of the Newcastle Anglican Corporation, Parish Council, and any committees established by them.

Vulnerable people means:

- persons with a cognitive impairment including an intellectual disability, a developmental disorder (including an autistic spectrum disorder), a neurological disorder, dementia, a severe mental illness, or a brain injury.
- a person who through life circumstances such as a aging or significant grief or loss requires increased support in daily life.
- people experiencing family or domestic violence.

Workers means clergy, church workers, contractors, officeholders, employees whether paid or voluntary.

Working with Children Check means the continuous checking services provided by the NSW Government for those in child-related work in New South Wales

5. Application

5.1 Commitment to children and vulnerable people

1. Newcastle Anglican and its parishes will communicate the [Newcastle Anglican commitment to the safety of children and vulnerable people](#) in an accessible way.
2. Every parish will have this Policy on its website and will communicate information about this Policy to all people involved in parish programmes.
3. Newcastle Anglican will maintain a [Safeguarding Guideline](#) to inform its stakeholders about the way it meets its legislative and regulatory obligations regarding the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable people.
4. Newcastle Anglican will periodically consult undertake consultations regarding safe ministry in parishes (including with children, vulnerable people, and their care givers) about this policy and its implementation.

5.2 Recruitment, screening and training

1. Newcastle Anglican will establish effective processes of recruiting and screening workers which comply with Commonwealth, State, and Canon law including:
 - a. verified [Working with Children Checks](#);
 - b. [general Synod Safe Ministry Requirements](#);
 - c. [National Criminal History Checks](#);
 - d. [National Register Clearances](#).
2. Incumbents and Churchwardens will be responsible for ensuring compliance with recruitment and screening requirements including verification of Working with Children Checks.
3. Newcastle Anglican will promote access to the Professional Standards Office and the Kids Helpline.

4. The Bishop shall prescribe Safe Ministry Training following the recommendation of the Director of Professional Standards and the Executive Director of Quality, Risk and Safety. Training requirements will be communicated to clergy and church workers through the Newcastle Anglican e-learning system. A person may apply to the Executive Director of Quality, Risk and Safety to be exempted from aspects of Safe Ministry Training on the ground of either *having completed similar learning with another organisation* or *being at risk of being adversely affected by the training content*.
5. Newcastle Anglican will promote [protective behaviours](#) among children using the resources promoted by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian.

5.3 Safe Ministry Practice including Codes of Conduct

1. Newcastle Anglican communicates its commitment to treat people with respect and dignity, irrespective of ability, gender, sexuality, race, age or contribution to the church through the Code of Behaviour called [Being Together Code of Conduct](#).
2. Newcastle Anglican communicates the standards expected of all clergy and church workers in the Code of Conduct called [Faithfulness in Service](#).
3. Newcastle Anglican communicates the code of practice for working with children in parish and church contexts through **Section 5** of the Code of Conduct called [Faithfulness in Service](#).
4. Clergy with the authority to hear confessions must comply with the [Confessions Episcopal Direction](#).
5. Newcastle Anglican will promote a culture of listening to children and vulnerable people.
6. Newcastle Anglican governance bodies and workers will listen to the views of children and vulnerable people, it will respect what they say and involve them in decision making, especially about matters that directly affect them.

5.4 Complaints, Grievances and Disclosures

1. Newcastle Anglican has a process for receiving [complaints](#).
2. The Director of Professional Standards will receive complaints or allegations of child abuse, sexual misconduct, and criminal behaviour which will be managed in accordance with the Professional Standards Ordinance 2012.
3. Grievances arising in parishes will be considered according to the Parish Grievance Procedure.
4. An alternate avenue for disclosures to be made is available via the Integrity Assurance (Whistleblower) Policy.

5.5 Effective Governance and Quality Assurance

1. Every governance body will conduct its activities in accordance with the [Governance Model Code of Conduct](#)
2. Newcastle Anglican will undertake periodic reviews of its safeguarding and professional standards processes including audits of parish safe ministry practice.

5.6 Reporting Child Abuse to Police and Authorities

1. Workers must [report suspicions of child abuse](#) to the Department of Communities and Justice.

2. Workers must report Child Abuse and other forms of abuse to NSW Police and comply with the [Reporting of Crime Policy](#)
3. Workers must report suspicions of child abuse, abuse, and misconduct in parishes and/or relating to the conduct of clergy and church workers to the Director of Professional Standards.

5.7 Supervising persons of concern

1. Newcastle Anglican will comply with the General Synod [Policy-for-Safe-Ministry-with-Persons-of-Concern](#).
2. No person who has a conviction or finding that calls into question their suitability to be around children or young people may attend a parish activity or event, including worship, without the agreement of the Director of Professional Standards.
3. Newcastle Anglican will utilise the [National Register](#) of the Anglican Church of Australia.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

<p>The Diocesan Bishop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Head of Agency, or Church Authority as defined by the Professional Standards Ordinance • Oversees and implements Safe Ministry Policy and Protocols at Diocesan level • Appoints and licenses clergy and licensed lay workers in the Diocese • Disciplines Clergy and church workers under the Professional Standards Ordinance 2012 and the Clergy Discipline Ordinance 2019 • Ensures the resolution of ministry issues in accordance with the Clerical Ministry Ordinance 2009 and the Diocesan Grievance Protocol • Reviews decisions made in relation to Parish Safety under the Administration of Parishes Ordinance 2010 • Initiates policy and procedural development in relation to safe ministry within the Diocese • Oversees the investigation of complaints under Faithfulness in Service not under the auspices of the Professional Standards Ordinance 2012 • Approves safe ministry training curriculum • Provides direction for hearing Confessions.
<p>Assistant Bishops and Archdeacons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the Bishop in discharging his/her responsibilities within a region or to a group of ministries within the Diocese • May act as the delegate of the Bishop
<p>Diocesan Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approves all safe ministry policies and protocols for the diocese following consultation with the Professional Standards Committee • Assigns tasks to office holders to ensure the implementation of this

	<p>Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures office holders have adequate resources for the implementation of the Safe Ministry Policy and Protocols Appoints members of the Diocesan Tribunal, Professional Standards Committee, Professional Standards Board and the Professional Standards Review Board
Professional Standards Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advises the Diocesan Council on policy for the protection of children and vulnerable people, and address related risks, and the appropriate support and redress for survivors of abuse Implements the Professional Standards Ordinance and protocols and carries out its functions in relation to investigations Liaises and communicates as detailed by the Professional Standards Ordinance of the Diocese Initiates policy and procedural development in relation to safe ministry within the Diocese Assists the Bishop with advice on request in relation to complaints under Faithfulness in Service which do not come under the auspices of the Professional Standards Ordinance 2012
Diocesan Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Quality, Risk and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures the delivery of safe ministry training within the Diocese Writes, reviews and provides recommendations to Diocesan Council in relation to Safe Ministry related Ordinance, Policy and Protocols Directs the work of the Newcastle Anglican staff enabling Safe Ministry Training
Director of Professional Standards (DPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acts as the Executive Officer of the Professional Standards Committee Carries out all functions as detailed in the Professional Standards Ordinance of the Diocese and relevant protocols Carries out all relevant functions in relation to the National Register Canon Assists the Bishop when requested in the resolution of complaints/grievances under the Grievance Protocol Assists the Bishop when requested in relation to complaints under Faithfulness in Service which do not come under the auspices of the Professional Standards Ordinance 2012
Bishops' Executive Assistant and Parish Support staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain records of licensing, recruitment and screening checks and other relevant information for clergy and other licence holders Maintain records of safe ministry training for all people authorised to work with children in the Diocese

<p>All Clergy and church workers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complies with the safe ministry polies, procedures and protocols and any processes established by Canon of General Synod in force in the Diocese or Ordinance of the Diocese • Complies with Faithfulness in Service • Undertake Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect and adhere to the Reporting of Crime Policy which include making reports to NSW Police and the Child Protection Helpline
<p>Incumbents (who may also be known as Rector, Priest-in-Charge, Locum or Priest appointed to a church in the parish under the care of the Bishop)</p>	<p>Have the day-to-day responsibility for ensuring implementation and compliance with the Parish Safety Policy including the screening and verification of cleared Working with Children Checks as required in the Volunteer and Other Church Workers Policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that people are familiar with the expectations of “Being Together” and “Faithfulness in Service”. • Ensuring that every person engaged in work with children and young people has a ministry description, is informed about the minimum guidelines for ministry with children, is supported and supervised in their work, and has their ministry reviewed at least annually. • Advises other clergy and Church Workers in their parish about the professional standards process. • 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 parish comply with the protocols and guidelines established under this policy. In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ must ensure the safety of any person attending Public Worship in the parish. ○ appoints lay Church Workers ensuring that they are suitable for the particular ministry and in accordance with this policy ○ implements safe ministry policies and protocols within the parish. ○ ensures education about the safety of people participating in parish life forms part of the parish teaching program each year ○ ensures the requirements of the Parish Safe Ministry Self Assessments are met and reported.
<p>Churchwardens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must ensure the safety of any person attending Public Worship in the parish. • Must advise the Incumbent, Parish Council and Diocesan Chief Executive promptly should they form the view that any Parish land, building or facilities has become unsafe, or that the Parish is unable to comply with all or part of the Diocesan Work Health and Safety Policies;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to the Bishop any irregularities in the performance of services or neglect of duty by any licensed person; • Advise the Bishop in a timely manner if they have serious concerns about the health and wellbeing of any member of the clergy serving in a licensed ministry within the Parish.
Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the Incumbent oversees the implementation of the safe ministry policies at a parish level, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ensures safe physical environments for ministry ○ is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of Work Health and Safety in the parish in accordance with the Diocesan WHS policies ○ is responsible for parish compliance with the Diocesan Privacy Policy • May, with the concurrence of the Incumbent, appoint a Safe Ministry Officer
Safe Ministry Officer	To assist the Incumbent, Church Wardens and Parish Council implement the safe ministry policies within their parish.
Program leaders	Every person exercising leadership or responsibility for a program in the parish is required to ensure that program complies with the safe ministry policies.

7 Information and Assistance

The Bishop at bishopsecretary@newcastleanglican.org.au
 Executive Director of Quality, Risk and Safety at qualityandrisk@newcastleanglican.org.au
 Director of Professional Standards at dps@newcastleanglican.org.au

8 Legal and Policy Framework

8.1 Legislation

The [Safeguarding Guideline](#) outlines the legislative framework applying to Safe Ministry and Parish Safety.

8.2 Canons

- [Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017](#)

8.3 Ordinances

- [Professional Standards Ordinance 2012](#)
- [Clerical Ministry Ordinance](#)

8.4 Standards

- [Being Together Code of Conduct.pdf](#)

- [Faithfulness in Service](#)
- [Governance Model Code of Conduct.pdf](#)

8.5 Policy Documents

- [Rights and Responsibilities Policy.docx](#)
- [Safety Health Wellbeing Policy.pdf](#)
- [Volunteer and Other Church Workers Policy.pdf](#)
- [Respectful Workplace Policy.pdf](#)
- [Integrity Assurance \(Whistleblower\) Policy.pdf](#)

8.6 External Resources

- [The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2015 \(Volunteering Australia\)](#)
- [Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Checks](#)
- [Working with Children Check](#)

9 Policy Governance

Tier	1
Process Owner	ED – People and Culture
Policy Owner	ED – Quality, Risk & Safety
Policy Approver	Diocesan Council
Approval Date	24 December 2023
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