



**Anglican Diocese of Ballarat**

**Safe Church Program Guides**

# Guidelines for Ministry to Children

**For all clerics and church workers**

This guide provides information for all clerics and church workers engaged in ministry to children. It includes information on

- Behaviour with children
- Guidelines for activities with children
- Preventing and responding to abuse

# Copyright Acknowledgement

The Anglican Diocese of Ballarat acknowledges the **Anglican Diocese of Sydney** as the copyright owners and authors of this document and thanks the **Professional Standards Unit** for its provision. The original title of this documents is: Safe Ministry Blueprint for Children’s Ministry Leaders and can be downloaded from [safeministry.org.au](http://safeministry.org.au).

The Diocese of Ballarat has altered the original document for to comply with Victorian and Ballarat diocesan legal and jurisdiction-specific purposes.

## Document Information

This document has been compiled by the Diocesan Safe Church Officer for use in the Anglican Diocese of Ballarat. Information contained in this document is specific to this diocese. Information contained in this document is compiled from a variety of sources including diocesan legislation, protocols and policy and Victorian state standards and regulation.

**Advice should be sought from a Safe Church Officer, diocesan cleric or the Director of Professional Standards in individual situations.**

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# Introduction

Ministry to children is vibrant and exciting work that is greatly significant to the life of the church. Teaching children about Jesus is kingdom work. It is a service to the children, the church family, and to God himself. Ministry to children offers great opportunities and also carries significant responsibilities for the wellbeing of those in our care. If we as church leaders take the teaching and leadership of children seriously, then we must provide an environment which is safe from any form of harm.

This booklet sets out the guidelines and Code of Conduct for leaders involved in children's ministry, whether paid or unpaid. This includes crèche leaders, playgroup leaders, Sunday School teachers, kids club leaders and camp leaders.

For the purposes of this booklet, children's ministry refers to ministry to children up to and including Year 6. Children in years 7-12 of high school are referred to as young people. There is also a separate booklet for leaders engaged in ministry to young people.



## Further Reading

The following Safe Church Program Guides applicable reading for all church workers:

- Guidelines for Screening and Licencing for Ministry
- Understanding and Responding to Family and Domestic Violence
- Guidelines for Reporting Abuse
- Guidelines for Physically Safe Churches
- Recognising and Responding to Bullying

The following Safe Church Program Guide is required readings for all church workers engaged in regular contact with young people in high school (years 7-12) in the course of conducting any church ministry.

- Guidelines for Ministry to Young People

Copies are available from your Parish Safe Church Officer, or from the diocesan website at: [ballaratanglican.org.au/safechurch/](http://ballaratanglican.org.au/safechurch/).

# General principles for ministry with children

## **Children have rights**

Children have the right to be safe and well looked after when they are in our care. They have the right to be protected, listened to, and their particular needs addressed in all church activities, whether mixed age or child-specific.

## **Leaders are responsible**

All those exercising a pastoral ministry involving children in the church have responsibility for the safety and welfare of the children in their care.

## **Abuse is power misused**

Leaders have authority over children because of their positional power and because of their greater age, maturity, physical size and life experience. Abuse arises from the misuse of authority or power. Any form of abuse is always wrong.

## **The role of the Children's Ministry Leader**

As a children's ministry leader, it is your role to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and welfare of the children in your care.

### **This will involve:**

- Ensuring that you satisfy the screening and training requirements
- Complying with the diocesan codes of conduct, including the guidelines contained in this booklet.

# Child Safe Standards

The Commission for Children & Young People (CCYP) is a Victorian independent statutory body that promotes improvement in policies and practices affecting the safety and wellbeing of Victorian children and young people. They have a particular focus on vulnerable children and young people. The CCYP is responsible for

- Upholding the Rights of Children in Victoria
- Promoting and auditing the Child Safe Standards
- Administering the Reportable Conduct Scheme

## The Child Safe Standards

In Victoria, all organisations (including churches) that provide services to children must adhere to the seven Child Safe Standards.

Parishes should be actively ensuring that the Child Safe Standards are being applied in all activities in which children and youth are involved. Further information on the standards can be downloaded from [ccyp.vic.gov.au](http://ccyp.vic.gov.au)

### Standard 1: Governance and Leadership

Organisations shall have strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements. Organisations shall have strong and clear governance arrangements that allow leaders to ensure child safety is a focus within their organisation. This includes:

- Leading from the top and embedding a culture that makes child safety paramount.
- Applying strong governance, documenting how duty-of-care responsibilities to children will be met.
- Making child safety a top priority in the organisation's operations.
- Taking a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse.
- Respecting, embracing and supporting the diversity of children.

### Standard 2: Clear Commitment to Child Safety

Organisations shall demonstrate its commitment to child safety by documenting how it will meet its duty-of-care and responsibilities to children through a Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety. This includes:

- Having a Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.
- Making its commitment clear and well communicated to staff, volunteers, children, families and the community.
- Requiring all staff and volunteers to uphold this approach.

### Standard 3. Code of Conduct

An organisation's code of conduct should establish clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

A child-safe code of conduct should spell out what types of behaviour are appropriate and inappropriate. It does not need to be an exhaustive list but should provide overarching guidelines about behaviour expectations.

#### **Standard 4: Human Resource Practices**

Organisations shall have screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.

Strong human resource practices can help reduce the risk of child abuse by new or existing staff or volunteers. Most organisations will already have some human resource practices in place but may benefit from a stronger focus on protecting children.

#### **Standard 5: Responding and Reporting**

Organisations shall have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

Organisations have a responsibility to promote and provide an environment in which children, staff and volunteers are encouraged to speak up when they are uncomfortable or concerned. This includes:

- Recognising that the safety of children is everyone's responsibility.
- Having a clear procedure for reporting concerns and allegations.
- Encouraging children to report if they feel unsafe or concerned.
- Making people within the organisation aware of their duty of care and legal responsibilities.
- Appropriately acting on concerns and complaints.
- Keeping and securely storing accurate records.

#### **Standard 6: Risk Management and Mitigation**

Organisations must have strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse. Risks always exist for children, and there may be some risks that are beyond your organisation's control. But you must do what is in your power to reduce the risk of children being harmed.

#### **Standard 7: Empowering Children**

Children have unique insights into their lives, their needs and the world around them. They have a right to be heard and have their concerns and ideas taken seriously, particularly on matters that affect them – including how to keep them safe.

# Screening and Training of Leaders

Sadly, many children have been abused physically, sexually and emotionally by trusted members of their communities, including people in churches. As a result, there are requirements for people involved in any kind of work with young people and children that we as leaders, must comply with, both under Victorian law and the Anglican Church's ordinances.



## Further Reading

Information on the Clearance for Ministry and licencing process can be found in the following Safe Church Program Guide

- Guidelines for Screening and Licencing Church Workers

Copies are available from your Parish Safe Church Officer, or from the diocesan website at: [ballaratanglican.org.au/safechurch/](http://ballaratanglican.org.au/safechurch/).

## What are you required to do?

The Clearance for Ministry Protocol schedules the following ministries involving children and young people as requiring a Clearance for Ministry and Safe Church Training:

- All clerics and candidates for ordination
- Verger, Master of Ceremonies, Head Server, Serving Team coordinator.
- A server where children participate in the serving ministry of that church.
- A person authorised to conduct a Divine Liturgy (Service of the Word)
- A person authorised to conduct a Divine Liturgy (Service of the Word with Communion by Extension)
- A person authorised to administer Holy Communion during Divine Liturgy (Eucharistic Assistant)
- Music director or coordinator, musician or vocalist in a choir or music group that includes children
- Children's group leader, coordinator, helper or worker (including Sunday Schools and youth groups)
- Small group leader where children who are not accompanied by their parent/guardian are present.
- Crèche/playgroup coordinator
- Crèche/playgroup worker except for parents/guardians where their children are actively present
- Welcomer engaged in 'child-related' work



If your ministry is on this list that you must undertake a Clearance for Ministry and attend Safe Church Training. This must be undertaken every three years for laity and every two years for clergy.

In addition, it is recommended that all volunteers are a member of a parish for at least six months before entering into a children's ministry position in that parish.

In our parish system, the cleric in charge of the parish has the ultimate responsibility for appointing people to children's ministry positions, even though in practice that responsibility is often delegated to other leaders including Parish Council.

## **Special Ministry Categories Involving Children**

### **Liturgical Ministers, Choristers and Musicians**

The following applies to all adults in liturgical, musical or choral ministries in each church.

#### **Criteria:**

1. Your church has children involved in liturgical, musical or choral ministries.
2. Adult members of those ministries may have cause for contact with children in the church or church facilities prior to, during, or after a service.

If either or both of the above criteria are met for that church, then all adults engaged in liturgical, musical or choral ministries at that church must undertake a Clearance for Ministry and Safe Church Training.

### **Playgroups**

Playgroups are (church-based) community meetings of parents and caregivers with their under-school age children. They provide an opportunity for your child to play with other children, a chance to meet other families in your community and to talk to about parenting and share experiences.

Playgroups require the parents or caregiver to be present and responsible for their children at all times. All adults who attend, lead or assist with playgroups, who do not have their own children present, are required to undertake a Clearance for Ministry and Safe Church Training.

If no church members attend the playgroup meetings they at least one person involved in a playgroup must undertake a Clearance for Ministry and Safe Church Training and be that playgroup's safety person.

### **Opportunity Shops**

Given that contact with children is ad hoc in op shops, only one person, preferably the op shop coordination or leader, must undertake a Clearance for Ministry and Safe Church Training.

# Children's Ministry Behaviour Guidelines

This advice is provided to protect both the children in our churches and you as a leader from situations where your integrity or actions might be questioned. **As a minister to children, you are also bound by the code of conduct in effect in the diocese: Faithfulness in Service 2021.**

## **In the exercise of your ministry, you must:**

- Never abuse children or cultivate relationships in order to initiate or cloak the abuse of children.
- Never be alone with a child away from the presence of other adults.
- Never have children to your home or visit children in their home when no other adult is present, and never meet privately with a child outside of church activities, except with the permission of a parent or guardian.
- Never touch a child in a manner which is inappropriate given their age, gender or cultural background.
- Never help children in ways that involve intimate care if the child is capable of doing it on his or her own (e.g., toileting or changing clothes).
- Never physically discipline a child.
- Never make drugs, alcohol or cigarettes available to children.
- Never develop inappropriate special relationships with particular children that could be seen as involving favouritism or any form of special treatment.
- Never engage in any contact with a child that is secretive (whether physical or through electronic media or in any other way).

There are good reasons for this code of conduct. Those who seek to abuse children may use group-based activities in order to gain the trust of a child. Having gained that trust, they may then engage in one-to-one activities that offer an opportunity for abuse to occur, including sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse of a child often starts with something relatively minor, but can then gradually build up to more involved behaviours through a process of grooming. It is often characterized by secrecy. This is why there must always be more than one adult leader present, and that no opportunities present themselves for a leader to engage in one-to-one activity with a child away from the presence of other adults.

A breach of this Code of Conduct may raise issues concerning your fitness to continue in ministry. You are to report any observations of another church worker or cleric acting in a way that may be contrary to this code of conduct to an appropriate authority.

# Guidelines for Children's Ministry Activities

The guidelines that follow cover a wide array of issues for children's ministry activities, such as the supervision of activities and their appropriateness, the physical safety of those involved, the importance of parental consent, transportation and trips away, forms of communication with children, as well the issue of meeting up with children outside of programmed events. However, there are three golden rules that are relevant to all of the guidelines.

## The Three Golden Rules

### 1. Two or More

There must always be two leaders aged 18 years or over present for all children's ministry events.

### 2. Never Alone

Leaders must not be alone with a child during an activity, and should make sure, as far as possible, that other leaders are not left alone with a child.

### 3. Stranger Danger

Leaders should be on the alert for people wandering around – a person unknown to the leaders or not part of the children's ministry should not be allowed access to children.

## Physical safety of children

One of the ways that we can protect children in our churches is to make sure that they are meeting in a physical environment that is appropriate and safe for them.

Consider the suitability of the space, the safety of the space, and the safety measures in place by asking the following questions. Ideally, it is preferable if you are objectively able to tick all the following boxes 'yes'.

## Suitability of the space

- Are toilet facilities available?
- Is the space appropriate for activities such as games and craft activities?
- Is the equipment being used suitable and appropriate for the ages using it? (this is a particularly pertinent question to ask if there is any climbing equipment)
- Is the floor non-slip and splinter-free?
- Is the area tidy?
- In regard to areas used by toddlers and preschoolers:
  - Is the area fenced off or contained in a room?
  - Is there a designated area for strollers that are not in use?

## Safety of the space

- Is the area to be used a safe distance from roads or traffic?
- Is the area far removed from places where people may engage in unsafe behaviour (such as smoking or drinking alcohol)?
- Is any glass installed at floor level safety glass?
- Are all child-height cupboards fitted with childproof locks?
- Is the heating safe to use near children (i.e. is the source of heat removed away from small inquisitive fingers)?
- Are all electrical wiring, sockets and appliances regularly maintained and in a safe condition? Are all sockets child-proofed?
- In regard to areas that may be used for games and outside play, has the area been checked for items that may pose a potential hazard and such items safely removed (such as broken glass, or discarded needles)?
- Is all furniture in a safe condition and without risk of toppling onto a child (such as stacks of chairs)?

## First aid and safety measures

- Is there a fire extinguisher or fire blanket available on-site? Is there a well-stocked first aid kit at the activity site?
- Is there a specific person in the church who is responsible for checking the first aid kit regularly and replenishing it?
- Is there a specific person on-site who is trained in first aid?
- Are all leaders aware of the fire safety and evacuation procedures?

## Supervision of Activities and Ratios

An important part of providing a safe environment is making sure you have enough leaders present to supervise the activities taking place adequately.

The degree of supervision required will vary according to the nature and environment of the activity, the age and maturity of the children and the size of the group. In considering the number of leaders required, take into account:

- The age, number, ability and gender mix of the children
- The venue, time, duration and nature of the activity

### **The suggested supervision ratios for low-risk onsite events would be:**

- A minimum of two supervisors/leaders must be met.
- Infants and preschoolers 1:5 (one leader for every five children)
- Primary school age to Year 6 1:7 (one leader for every seven children)

Where the risks in the activity increase, the supervision should also increase. For example, if you were to take primary-aged children offsite to indoor rock climbing, it would be appropriate to reduce the ratio to 1:4 (one leader for every four children). This is to account for the high-risk nature of the activity and the fact that it is off-site.

Please note that a junior leader (under the age of 16) does not count as a leader for the purposes of supervision.

## **Appropriateness of activities**

You should thoughtfully consider what message children may learn from the way events are organised and conducted. Games or activities that could in any way emphasise gender, physical, intellectual or ethnic differences should be assessed for their appropriateness.

To minimise the possibility of children being harmed, you should give careful consideration to any activities or games that require children to act alone or in pairs independent of leaders.

You should review in their entirety any DVDs, youtube clips, computer games, graphics, photographs and lyrics that you intend to show children. In assessing whether something is appropriate, you should be

governed by the age of the youngest child present. Censorship ratings should be kept to 'G' or 'PG' unless specific permission is granted by the senior minister. Though note that some G or PG material may still not be appropriate due to the themes it contains. If in doubt, seek the advice of your parish cleric.

## **Parental consent**

You must have the written consent of a parent or guardian before taking children away from church premises, and you must keep them informed of the place and timing of the event. If you can, include parents or guardians in the leadership team.

Ask parents or guardians for information about any physical needs (e.g., allergies), mental health needs (e.g., depression) or safety needs of the children in your care.

And never administer medications to a child without the written consent of a parent or guardian.

## **Transportation**

It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to arrange transportation to and from children's ministry events for their child unless another specific arrangement is in place.

You must have written permission from a parent or guardian before a child can be driven anywhere by someone other than the parent for the purposes of a church activity.

When making transport arrangements, take reasonable steps to ensure that:

- All drivers or operators are licensed (green Ps or above), responsible, experienced and are not impaired by alcohol or any other mind-altering or addictive substance; and

- All motor vehicles and other forms of transport used are registered, insured, safe and fitted with age-appropriate child restraints or safety devices (e.g. seat belts, life jackets).

Leaders should avoid being alone with a child in a motor vehicle or driving a child home unaccompanied, even with parental permission. If such a situation is unavoidable, inform another leader of the trip and the reason for it.

## Trips away

It is not usually appropriate to have children under the age of Year 5 sleeping over at events. When events involve children aged Year 5 and above sleeping over, you should ensure that the sleeping accommodation (where possible) is:

- Segregated between males and females
- Supervised by more than one person, preferably including a parent or guardian.

And ensure (where possible) that those supervising the sleeping accommodation:

- Are of the same gender as the children being supervised; and
- Do not sleep in close personal proximity to a child unless they are a parent or guardian of the child.

Leaders should never share accommodation with only one child unless they are a parent or guardian of the child.

Venues should allow for the privacy of all parties to be respected, particularly when changing clothes, washing and toileting. If you need to wash or toilet a child, tell another adult what you are doing.

## Communication

You should take care that your communication with a child or children is appropriate and above reproach. Be aware that those who wish to abuse children may use electronic communications to try to cultivate secretive or exclusive relationships.

Leaders should not contact children by email, mail, social media, video calls, using chatrooms or by any other form of electronic communication. Leaders should not call or text a child on the child's mobile phone.

**All electronic communication must be with the child's parent or guardian.** On the rare occasions when a leader might need to speak to a child on the phone for ministry purposes, the leader is to call the child's parent to explain why he or she is calling. Only then, with the parent's permission, should the leader speak with the child. The leader should be conscious of keeping the conversation with the child short.

## Photographs/videos

Leaders should not take photos of children without parental consent, and should only use photos in accordance with the purposes for which that consent was given.

Do not photograph any child who has asked not to be photographed. Photos of children should focus on small groups rather than individuals:

- Do not identify in writing the person/s in the photograph, e.g. tagging on Facebook.
- All children must be appropriately dressed when photographed (e.g., not in swimsuits or pyjamas).

Embarrassing or offensive photos or videos must not be either taken or shared.

Parental permission must be sought before posting photographs or videos of children online. Privacy is of utmost importance and care should be taken to protect children from having their personal information being displayed on a social networking site or Church website.

Generally, videos should only be used to showcase/advertise ministry-related events and activities.

When a video of services or activities is distributed or streamed on the web or via other broadcast media, signs and/or notifications should be posted that indicates the service is being or will be broadcast.

### **Meeting outside programmed events**

It is not appropriate for leaders to meet up with children socially unless it is in the context of socialising with the child's family.

# Age-specific guidelines

## Infants (0-2 years)

### Health and Safety

Children should never leave the crèche area unless accompanied by the adult responsible for them.

Be aware of issues of hygiene. If a child vomits or soils an area of the crèche, that area should be cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible. Toys and equipment should be cleaned regularly. Ensure that no furniture or other items could topple or drop onto a child.

### Parents

Where parents are readily accessible, they should be asked to change nappies and undertake toileting. If parents are not available, experienced female leaders should carry out these tasks, but always with another child or leader present.

### Physical Contact

Very young children are highly dependent on touch for their proper development. This means that in dealing with them, we must be very aware of their needs at particular ages and stages.

Physical contact is primarily for the purpose of assisting/comforting a child for a short period of time. Leaders should not continue physical contact for longer than necessary to achieve this purpose. All physical contact should be in the open and able to be seen by others, for example, sitting on a leader's lap to be comforted should occur in view of others.

#### **Appropriate physical contact for this age includes:**

- Hand-holding to reassure or to guide
- Offering open hugs (placing one arm around the child's shoulders) to welcome or comfort a child
- Short periods of carrying, sitting on one's lap, rocking, rubbing or patting backs to comfort a child who is distressed
- Sitting on one's lap to check discomfort or ill health
- Sitting beside a leader to read a book
- Necessary touching of genital areas while changing a nappy
- Appropriate touch to administer first aid or assist with personal hygiene, for example, changing clothes or blowing noses

#### **Inappropriate physical conduct for this age includes:**

- Hitting or shaking
- Forceful grabbing or picking up
- Unnecessary touching of the genital areas



## Preschoolers (3-5 years)

### Health and Safety

Children should never leave the preschool area unless accompanied by the adult responsible for them.

Children of this age are generally toilet-trained. A leader should accompany a child to the toilet with another leader or child but should assist the child only where necessary.

### Physical Contact

Except in circumstances of physical danger or medical emergency, children have the right to refuse touch. In general, physical contact should be initiated by the child or occur with their permission.

#### **Appropriate physical contact for this age includes:**

- Open hug (with space between you) with the child's permission
- Placing an arm around the shoulder and giving a gentle squeeze from the side
- Patting backs;
- Hand-holding to reassure or guide
- Sitting beside a leader to read a book
- Sitting on a female leader's lap to check discomfort or ill health
- Carrying for a short period to reassure if hurt or facilitate separation from a parent (providing the child wants to be held)
- Holding firmly across the upper arms to restrain or prevent injury

#### **Inappropriate physical contact includes:**

- Hitting or shaking;
- Forceful grabbing or picking up;
- Kissing or coaxing a child to kiss you;
- Extended hugging or tickling; and
- Touching any area of the body normally covered by a swimming costume.

## Primary age children (6-12 years)

### Health and Safety

Have clearly thought out procedures for the conclusion of the program and advise parents of them. Infants will generally need to be collected by parents. Will primary-aged children be dismissed, or will they need to be supervised until parents collect them?

If Sunday School is held offsite, there should be clear guidelines and procedures to follow. The following issues need to be thought through:

- Are children taken there by parents or leaders?

- How are the children collected?
- How is communication maintained between off-site groups and the main congregation?

## **Parents**

Parents should be kept informed of details of the ministry, including the names of leaders, current and future curriculum, and upcoming special events, etc.

Be considerate of parents by being careful about children's clothing, e.g., wearing paint shirts when painting and avoiding extra rough games.

## **Physical Contact**

### **Appropriate physical contact for this age includes:**

- Open hug (with space between you) with the child's permission or placing an arm around the shoulder and giving a gentle squeeze from the side;
- High fives
- Holding firmly across the upper arms to restrain or prevent injury

### **Inappropriate physical contact includes:**

- Hitting or shaking
- Forceful grabbing
- Kissing or coaxing a child to kiss you
- Extended hugging or tickling
- Touching any area of the body normally covered by a swimming costume
- Sitting children on your lap

# Child Abuse

Child Abuse is any form of behaviour or action that harms a child. The following categories come from the Victorian Commission for Children & Young People's list of reportable conduct:

A Child is anyone under the age of 18 years.

## There are five types of reportable conduct:

1. A **sexual offence** committed against, with, or in the presence of a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding concerning the offence has been commenced or concluded
2. **Sexual misconduct** committed against, with, or in the presence of a child
3. **Physical violence** committed against, with, or in the presence of a child
4. Any behaviour that causes significant **emotional or psychological harm** to a child
5. Significant **neglect** of a child.

## Perpetrators of child abuse can be:

- Adults
- Young people and older children

## Child abuse includes:

- Abuse that causes actual harm
- Abuse that is likely to harm
- Intentional harm
- Harm by omission (i.e. neglect)
- Harm by commission (i.e. exploitation)

## Important Note

The diocese has expressed a clear policy for the safety of all children in its Child Safe Policy. This policy extends to the abuse of children in the homes of anyone who is a stipendiary or volunteer member.

Any allegation of any form of harm by a volunteer or stipendiary member against a child will result in a notification to all relevant authorities regardless of the location in which the abuse took place. This includes inadvertent harm and witnessing family violence.

# Reporting abuse

It is your responsibility to ensure that any child abuse that you become aware of is reported to the relevant authorities. You may become aware of abuse because you have observed indicators of abuse, another person has informed you of their concerns for a child or a child has told you they are being abused.

In some situations, you may be compelled by law to report the abuse. **Advice should be sought from a Safe Church Officer, diocesan cleric or the Director of Professional Standards in individual situations.**



## Further Reading

Information on reporting abuse and Mandatory Reporting can be found in the following Safe Church Program Guide

- Guidelines for Reporting Abuse

Copies are available from your Parish Safe Church Officer, or from the diocesan website at: [ballaratanglican.org.au/safechurch/](http://ballaratanglican.org.au/safechurch/).

## If a child tells you about any abuse, you should:

- Listen to their story
- Comfort them if they are distressed
- Let them know you're glad they told you and that they did the right thing
- Let them know you are going to get help about what to do next and that you will get back to them.

## As soon as possible after the disclosure, you must:

- Write down the details of what was said
- Report the information to the appropriate authorities

## Write down the details of what was said including such details as:

- Who you spoke to, date, time and place, what you said,
- What the child said, and
- Any grounds for forming the belief that abuse has occurred.

Keep to the facts about what was said and don't express your opinion. Be aware that this document must be signed and dated and could be subpoenaed in court proceedings.

## Report the information to the appropriate authorities.

Contact the **Director of Professional Standards** or the **Diocesan Safe Church Officer** if you are unsure of what to do in any circumstance or where an allegation is regarding the parish clergy.

Do not undertake an investigation, and do not disclose the allegations to the alleged offender at this initial stage.

## Confidentiality

You must treat any suspicion, knowledge or disclosure of abuse with the utmost confidentiality. Apart from reporting it to the relevant authorities and to your ministry leader or Minister, you must not ordinarily share the information with anyone else.

## Pastoral care

A victim of abuse may require immediate specialist counselling or other support. When a report is made to the Director of Professional Standards, the Director of Professional Standards can provide advice on care for victims and their families. Victims often need ongoing contact and support, and the parish clergy should ensure that an appropriate person is appointed to follow up with them.

If you have had someone disclose abuse to you, you will also need to be appropriately cared for and supported. You may need to debrief about how the experience has affected you.

# Contact details

## Diocesan Safe Church Officer

The Rev'd Glen Wesley  
Anglican Diocese of Ballarat  
safechurch@ballaratanglican.org.au  
**03 5331 1183** – Registry  
0429 146 566 - Out of Hours

## Director of Professional Standards

Ms Claire Sargent  
**1800 377 842** - 24/7 Messaging Service  
PO Box 337, Canterbury, Vic. 3126  
The Director of Professional Standards responds to all **complaints of abuse against clergy and Church workers**. The first step in making a complaint is to call the information line.

# Safe Church Program Guides

These documents are aimed at informing people across all levels of leadership and church engagement to help ensure greater awareness, transparency and accountability within our churches and to help foster a culture of safe ministry at all levels of the church.

1. Guidelines for Screening and Licencing for Ministry
2. Guidelines for Reporting Abuse
3. Guidelines on Church Safety for Parish Clergy
4. Guidelines for Parish Safe Church Officers
5. Guidelines for Ministry to Children
6. Guidelines for Ministry to Young People
7. Guidelines on Church Safety for Parents and Families
8. Recognising and Responding to Family & Domestic Violence
9. Recognising and Responding to Bullying
10. Guidelines for Physically Safe Churches

All guides are available from the Bishop's Registry or from the diocesan website at [ballaratanglican.org.au/safechurch](http://ballaratanglican.org.au/safechurch)