

SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING

For Children and Young people.

If you are under 18, this section is for you! We want you to be safe and enjoy your activities within this parish. Whether you come to church or have fun at one of the activities held at the church, we will do everything in our power to keep you safe.

We will keep you safe by making sure that the rooms you use are kept nice and are suitable for you to use. We check to see which adults are part of your activities. We have what is called a Code of Conduct (instructions for how adults must behave when working with children) and a Child Safe Policy, which helps us all understand what we all need to do to keep you safe.

Sometimes if children and young people have concerns, they think that adults will not believe them. In this parish, we will always take what you say seriously. If you ever have any worries or concerns about anything, please let your parent or carer know, or let Rev Liz, Vicar Helen or a team member of the church know. Rev Liz runs the kid's ministries and Vicar Helen is the Vicar of the parish.

In the foyer of The Anglican Centre, you will see some posters around SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING on the walls, with information if you or your parents wish to make a complaint, share ideas, tell us of concerns you might have, or if you would like to help us run our programs. You have a voice, and we want to hear your voice at any time!

FOR ADULTS

This Parish is fully committed to child safety and safe ministry. We have in place a Code of Conduct for all clergy, staff, and volunteers, as well as a Commitment to Child Safety, policies and procedures for reporting any suspected abuse, as well as ongoing training in accordance with the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne Safe Ministry Program.

The care, the safety and the welfare of children are embedded in policies and practices, the latter of which are being updated to be compliant with new child safe standards which begin on 1 July 2022.

The Parish has a commitment to zero tolerance of child abuse. Jesus himself is the exemplar of caring for children: *'Let the children come to me and do not hinder them'* (Matt 19.14). It is our intention to be a church where children and families are welcome, included and confident to participate fully, including contributing to the way we organise children's programs and shape our policies. We want to be a church where children and young people are fully engaged and have every opportunity to thrive and grow.

All allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently with policies and procedures. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities if there are concerns about a child's safety, which we follow sensitively and rigorously. We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

What is Child Abuse?

Abuse and neglect includes but is not limited to:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Family Violence
4. Sexual Abuse
5. Grooming
6. Neglect

Staff and Volunteers

The Parish is committed to regularly training and educating staff and volunteers on child safety and abuse risks. Staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct, and they, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

The culture of this Parish aims for all people, including staff, volunteers, parents/carers and children to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. Staff and volunteers are trained to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

Staff and volunteers will continue to develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

Recruitment

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand this Parish's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse. The Parish expects all adult behaviours and attitudes towards children to be safe and appropriate. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Staff and volunteers are interviewed prior to appointment. A rigorous screening process is in place, including interview questions; checking of references; ensuring each person has required checks; and that they have completed all required Safe Ministry Training through the Diocese of Melbourne.

Applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability are strongly encouraged.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au> for further information

We support and respect all children. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability. We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Fair procedures

All allegations of abuse and safety concerns are recorded using a Diocese-generated incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, families and where age-appropriate, children are kept up to date. Appropriate pastoral care will be offered to all.

Responsibilities

There are two key areas of legal responsibility:

1. **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
2. **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Anyone who is a mandatory reporter must comply with their duties.

A number of risk management strategies are in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, doors where glass allows for greater levels of safety, doors that can lock etc)

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. Families and children are encouraged to contribute to child safe policies. Where possible, the local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability will be consulted and listened to for how best to care for children.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

1. a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
2. behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
3. someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
4. observing suspicious behaviour.

For immediate help (from the [DHS website](#))

1. To report concerns that are life threatening, ring Victoria Police 000
2. To contact a child protection office close to you, call [a local office](#).

3. To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child after hours, call:

After Hours Child Protection Emergency Service

Ph: 13 12 78 (5.00pm – 9.00am Monday – Friday, 24 hours on weekends and public holidays).

Note: this is an emergency service for weeknights, weekends and public holidays only.

How to make a complaint

The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne takes all complaints of misconduct very seriously. This information is intended to help you if you wish to make a complaint, have been or are being abused or harassed by clergy or Church officers, including Regional Bishops, in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne.

Kooyoora

Kooyoora Ltd has been appointed by the Melbourne Diocese to respond to all complaints of misconduct including sexual, physical, spiritual or emotional abuse by clergy or Church officers. Kooyoora Ltd is an independent Professional Standards company which undertakes Professional Standards work for not-for-profit charitable entities.

The first step in making a complaint is to call the recorded information line at any time on **1800 135 246**. All information provided to this service is strictly confidential. The person taking a message on this number will ask you to give a name and your phone number or address so that the Director can contact you as soon as possible. Alternatively, you can write to the Director:

Director of Professional Standards

Kooyoora Ltd

PO Box 329

Canterbury VIC 3126

Other important websites, especially the first link:

www.melbourneanglican.org.au/safe-ministry/

[Commission for Children and Young People](#)

[Department of Human Services](#)

The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne oversees all Child Safety policies and procedures which in turn reflect requirements as outlined by the Victorian Government and the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP). For details of the Diocese Child Safe Guidelines, please visit <https://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/governance/child-safety/>

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak with our Assistant Priest & Children's and Families Minister, Rev Liz Rankin – lizr@mmmanglican.org.au