



## THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

### PARISH SAFETY POLICY

#### **Title:**

This policy is called the **Parish Safety Policy**.

#### **Introduction:**

The Anglican Diocese of Newcastle is committed to ensuring that all people who participate in our programs and ministries have a safe and rewarding experience.

The focus of this policy is on the safety of children and vulnerable people.

#### **Policy:**

In ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, the Diocese 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.

#### **Key Definitions:**

Whenever we speak about **children**, we mean every person **under the age of 18**.

Whenever we speak about **vulnerable people** we mean 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. We also mean a person who through life circumstances such as a significant grief or loss requires increased support in daily life. We also mean people experiencing family or domestic violence.



This Policy Document must be read in conjunction with the Policy Implementation Frameworks and the Policy Implementation Guides.

**Scope:**

This Policy applies to all parishes associated with the Diocese of Newcastle and applies to:

1. all clergy and church workers whether paid or voluntary and includes Board, Council and committee members;
2. as specified herein,
  - a. guests or hirers of the church and its facilities
  - b. contractors, subcontractors, delivery persons or others engaged to provide services; and
  - c. those who access our site and/or programs.

This policy (together with the frameworks and guides) 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 (s 13 of the Clerical Ministry Ordinance 2009) and must be observed by parish officers, church workers and other ministers (s 93 of the Administration of Parishes Ordinance 2010).

**Availability of the Policy, Implementation Framework and Guides**

The Policy, Implementation Framework and Guides will be maintained on the Diocesan Website.

Parishes are to ensure a link to the Policy, Implementation Framework and Guides can be easily found on their parish website.

At least once each year the link to the Policy, Implementation Framework and Guides will be communicated to people involved in parish programmes with children and vulnerable people as staff, volunteers, parents/care-givers, and participants.



## PARISH SAFETY POLICY – IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK #1

### Supporting Participation by children and vulnerable people

The parishes of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle 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.

We listen to the views of children and vulnerable people, respect what they say and involve them when we make decisions, especially about matters that will directly affect them.

We will communicate our commitment to children and vulnerable people in ways that are accessible by them (The commitments to children can be found in the PARISH SAFETY POLICY GUIDE #2 – ANGLICAN ADULT COMMITMENT TO THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE).

We will use the Office of the Children Guardian SAFE themes of safe spaces, the *undies* rule, recognising your feelings and finding five people kids can turn to if they feel sad, scared or upset in assisting young children develop their protective behaviours as a situational prevention approach to protecting children by attempting to make it more difficult for abusers to engage in inappropriate behaviour and increasing the chances of them getting caught.

(<https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/safe-series>)

We will promote a parish culture of listening to children. (<https://www.newcastleanglican.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/children-participation-booklet-web.pdf>)



## PARISH SAFETY POLICY – IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK #2

### Governance for safety

1. The Diocesan Council is responsible for approving safe ministry policies and receives recommendations about those policies from the Professional Standards Committee<sup>1</sup>.
2. The Parish Council is responsible for ensuring the safe ministry policy is followed in the parish<sup>2</sup>.
3. The Incumbent and the Churchwardens of the Parish have the day to day responsibility for ensuring implementation and compliance with the safe ministry policy.
4. The Parish Council with the concurrence of the Incumbent may appoint a Safe Ministry Officer to assist with implementation and compliance with the safe ministry policy.
5. Every person exercising leadership or responsibility for a program in the parish is required to ensure that program complies with the safe ministry policy.

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<sup>1</sup> The rules for the Diocesan Council are found in the Diocesan Council Ordinance 1929. The rules for the Professional Standards Committee are found in the Diocesan Council Ordinance 1929 and the Professional Standards Ordinance 2012.

<sup>2</sup> The rules for the Parish Council are found in the Administration of Parishes Ordinance 2010.



## PARISH SAFETY POLICY – IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK #3

### Supporting clergy, church workers, staff, volunteers, contractors and parishioners:

1. The Diocese has adopted a general code of behaviour called “Being Together” which includes our commitment to treat people with respect and dignity, irrespective of ability, gender, sexuality, race, age or contribution to the church. (PARISH SAFETY POLICY GUIDE #3 – BEING TOGETHER)
2. The Diocese has adopted a code of conduct for clergy and church workers called “Faithfulness in Service” which sets out the standards expected by all engaged in Christian ministry. (PARISH SAFETY POLICY GUIDE #4 – STANDARDS FOR CLERGY AND CHURCH WORKERS )
3. The Diocese has adopted minimum guidelines for ministry with children (PARISH SAFETY POLICY GUIDE #5 – MINIMUM GUIDELINES FOR MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN ).
4. The Incumbent of every parish is responsible for ensuring that people are familiar with the expectations of “Being Together” and “Faithfulness in Service”.
5. The Incumbent of every parish is responsible for 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.
6. The Diocese has adopted a Professional Standards process for dealing complaints of child abuse, sexual misconduct and criminal behaviour<sup>3</sup> which operates alongside a Clergy Discipline Process<sup>4</sup>. The Incumbent of every parish is responsible for advising other clergy and church workers in their parish about this process.
7. The Diocese has adopted a complaints and grievance process for dealing with other complaints and grievances (PARISH SAFETY POLICY GUIDE #6 – GREIVANCE PROTOCOL). The Diocese also has a Ministry Issues process for responding to pastoral breakdown in a ministry context, clergy sick leave and other issues affecting the ministry setting<sup>5</sup>.
8. The Diocese will promote access to the Professional Standards Office and the Kids Helpline (PARISH SAFETY POLICY GUIDE #7 – PROMOTING ACCESS TO KEY COMPLAINTS AND SUPPORT).
9. Every member of the clergy having a licence or permission to undertake ministry (except for a limited permission to officiate) and every lay person working in a child related role including teaching Special Religious Education is required to complete a full unit of Safe Ministry Training within six months of appointment and then complete a

<sup>3</sup> For more details refer to the Professional Standards Ordinance 2012 and the Professional Standards Protocol 2013

<sup>4</sup> For more details see the Clergy Discipline Ordinance 1966

<sup>5</sup> For more details refer to the Clerical Ministry Ordinance 2009



Safe Ministry Refresher Unit every three years. The Bishop may approve education completed in another Diocese as equivalent training. The normative form of education in the Diocese is the online training via <http://www.openlearning.com/courses/safe-ministry-online-induction>



## PARISH SAFETY POLICY – IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK #4

### Recruitment

The work of the Diocese is supported by many clergy and church workers who serve in both paid and voluntary roles.<sup>6</sup>

1. Any person being considered for ordination within the Diocese and any member of the clergy seeking to transfer to the Diocese participates in a comprehensive discernment process aimed at ensuring their suitability for ministry including interviews, national police check and reference checks people being considered for ordination in the Diocese also undertake pre-ordination psychological testing.
2. The responsibilities for a member of the clergy are outlined in the Ordinal for Bishops, Priests and Deacons and in the Constitution, Canons, Ordinances and Policies in force in the Diocese of Newcastle. Clergy are responsible for familiarising themselves with them and will receive education and support especially at the time any of them is changed.
3. Any person undertaking lay ministry participates in a rigorous recruitment, screening and selection process including interviews and reference checks.
4. By 31 August 2019, all remunerated lay ministry roles will have a role description. Throughout the twelve months through to 28 February 2020, parishes will be introducing role descriptions for all volunteer lay ministry roles. Sample role descriptions can be found at (<https://www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish-administration/screening/ministry-descriptions/> ) and a template for role descriptions can be found at [https://www.anglican.org.au/data/Sample\\_Ministry\\_Position\\_Template.pdf](https://www.anglican.org.au/data/Sample_Ministry_Position_Template.pdf)
5. Any person (ordained or lay) serving in a role involving child contact must have a clear NSW Working with Children Check (available to persons 18 years and over), a clear Anglican National Register Check, complete a Safe Ministry Screening Questionnaire including persons under the age of 18 years must complete an alternate form, and a reference check for them must be completed on the form prescribed form (PARISH SAFETY POLICY GUIDE #7).
6. The recruitment records for clergy, ordination candidates and licensed lay workers are maintained in the Diocesan office. The recruitment records for parish staff and lay ministry workers are maintained by the parish. Parishes may lodge an electronic copy of recruitment records in the Diocesan Office.
7. Parishes must advise the Diocesan Office annually as part of the Parish Annual Returns, and at other times as required, the names of all volunteer church workers, their contact details, their roles and their Working with Children Check details.

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<sup>6</sup> The framework for selection and recruitment is found in the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017.



## PARISH SAFETY POLICY – IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK #5

### Dealing with Complaints

The Incumbent of the parish is available to parishioners and to those who utilise the services of the parish to receive expressions of concern or receive complaints. Where a matter involves the Incumbent a parishioner may express concern or make a complaint to an Assistant Bishop or an Archdeacon

Bishop for the Inland Episcopate – [BishopSonia@NewcastleAnglican.org.au](mailto:BishopSonia@NewcastleAnglican.org.au)

Bishop for the Coastal Episcopate – [BishopCharlie@NewcastleAnglican.org.au](mailto:BishopCharlie@NewcastleAnglican.org.au)

Archdeacon of Newcastle – [ArthurCopeman@NewcastleAnglican.org.au](mailto:ArthurCopeman@NewcastleAnglican.org.au)

The Incumbent, an Archdeacon or the Assistant Bishop may direct or assist a person expressing concern or making a complaint to contact the Director of Professional Standards

[DPS@NewcastleAnglican.org.au](mailto:DPS@NewcastleAnglican.org.au)

The Diocese maintains a complaints email. This should not be used for matters relating child abuse or sexual abuse of adults. Those matters should be reported directly to the Professional Standards Director (see below). The complaints email is [complaints@newcastleanglican.org.au](mailto:complaints@newcastleanglican.org.au)

### Reporting Child Abuse and Sexual Abuse of Adults

Any member of the clergy or a church worker who is concerned about child abuse or you should contact NSW Police [insert details] directly. They should also make a report to the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111 (<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/Protecting-kids/mandatory-reporters/how-to>)

If a member of the clergy or a church worker is unsure about contacting NSW Police or the Child Protection Helpline or need assistance in reporting they should contact the Director of Professional Standards [insert details]

The Director of Professional Standards is the lead officer for responding to disclosures of child abuse, sexual abuse or criminal conduct. The work of the Diocesan Director of Professional Standards is overseen by the Professional Standards Committee.<sup>7</sup>

### Promoting access to the Professional Standards Office and Kids Helpline

Parishes will ensure that a copy of the Professional Standards Office & Kids Helpline contact poster (<https://www.newcastleanglican.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Professional-Standards->

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<sup>7</sup> The rules governing the work of the Director of Professional Standards and the Professional Standards Committee are found in the Professional Standards Ordinance 2012, the Administration of Parishes Ordinance 2010 and the Professional Standards Protocols 2013.



[Poster.pdf](#)) is placed on the main notice board in each church building, on the inside of each cubicle door in a toilet in a church, parish hall or parish office and near the wash-hand basin in each toilet in a church, parish hall or parish office.



## **PARISH SAFETY POLICY – IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK #6**

### **Supervising Persons of Concern**

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.

Whenever the Diocese is aware of a person of concern the Director of Professional Standards seeks to enter into a participation agreement with that person in which the safety of other people is of paramount concern. The Professional Standards Committee and the Director of Professional Standards have the enforceable power to direct that a person may not attend worship or church activities.<sup>8</sup>

## **PARISH SAFETY POLICY – IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK #7**

### **Safe Ministry Assurance**

The Diocese will undertake a regular review of the implementation of the Safe Ministry Policy requirements in parishes. This review will be completed by the Safe Ministry Assurance Officer.

The Bishop, an Assistant Bishop, an Archdeacon, the Professional Standards Committee, the Diocesan Chief Executive or the Director of Professional Standards may direct that an audit or review of the compliance with the Safe Ministry Policy in a parish and may direct how that audit or review will be undertaken.

## **PARISH SAFETY POLICY – IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK #8**

### **Communication**

All clergy and church workers are required to undertake refresher training in the child safe policies once every three years.

The Incumbent of the parish is responsible for ensuring that parish clergy and church workers are advised, at least annually about this policy.

This policy will be outlined to all new staff as part of the child safe training.

Children and their parents joining our program/s will receive information providing a link to this Policy [www.newcastleanglican.org.au/safe-ministry/](http://www.newcastleanglican.org.au/safe-ministry/)

Incumbents will ensure that information about ensuring the safety of people participating in parish life forms part of the parish teaching program each year

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<sup>8</sup> [https://www.anglican.org.au/data/Policy\\_for\\_Safe\\_Ministry\\_with\\_Persons\\_of\\_Concern\\_020817.pdf](https://www.anglican.org.au/data/Policy_for_Safe_Ministry_with_Persons_of_Concern_020817.pdf)



## **PARISH SAFETY POLICY – IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK #9**

### **Review of Parish Safety Policy, Parish Safety Policy Implementation Framework and Parish Safety Guides**

The Diocesan Council will seek feedback on this policy from clergy, church workers, parents and other stakeholders in March each year.

This policy will be reviewed at the April meeting of the Diocesan Council each year.



## **PARISH SAFETY POLICY GUIDE #1 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ENSURING SAFE MINISTRY**

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:

### **The Diocesan Bishop**

Is 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 1966
- 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

### **Assistant Bishops and Archdeacons**

- 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

### **Diocesan Council**

- Approves all Safe Ministry Policy and protocols for the diocese following consultation with the Professional Standards Committee
- Assigns tasks to office holders to ensure the implementation of this Policy
- 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, Professional Standards Review Board

### **Professional Standards Committee**

- 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
- liaise and communicate as detailed by the Professional Standards Ordinance of the Diocese
- Ensures the delivery of safe ministry training within 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

#### **Director of Professional Standards (DPS)**

- 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

#### **Diocesan Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer**

- Writes, reviews and provides recommendations to Diocesan Council in relation to Safe Ministry related Ordinance, Policy and Protocols
- Oversees and directs the work of the Diocesan Safe Ministry Assurance Officer

#### **Bishops' Executive Assistant and Diocesan Office Staff under the oversight of the Chief Operating Officer**

- Maintain records of licensing, working with children checks and other recruitment information for clergy and other licence holders
- Maintain records of safe ministry training for all people authorised to work with children in the Diocese

#### **Safe Ministry Assurance Officer**

- Undertakes reviews of parish compliance with the safe ministry requirements of the Diocese

#### **All Clergy and church workers**

- Complies with the Safe Ministry Policy 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

**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)**

- must ensure the safety of any person attending Public Worship and other events in the parish.
- Appoints lay church workers ensuring that they are suitable for the particular ministry and in accordance with this policy
- Implements the Safe Ministry Policy within the parish.
- ensures the safety of people participating in parish life forms part of the parish teaching program each year

**Churchwardens**

- must ensure the safety of any person attending Public Worship and other events 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;
- 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**

- With the Incumbent oversees the implementation of the Safe Ministry Policy at a parish level, particularly:
  - 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 Policy within their parish.



PARISH SAFETY POLICY GUIDE #2 – ANGLICAN ADULT COMMITMENT TO THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

The children, young and vulnerable people of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle must be kept safe.

We will be kept safe by ADULTS who...



**CARE** for us as we are a precious gift from God

**RESPECT** our rights, abilities, contributions, needs and wishes

**ASK** us how we are feeling and what we are thinking, ask us what we need

**LISTEN** to what we are really saying

**TELL** us about dangers – and what's being done to protect us

**SEE** what other adults are doing, and how they are behaving

**DO** what they are supposed to do and what they say they will do



**STEP UP AND SPEAK OUT** when we are being hurt, bullied or treated badly.



## PARISH SAFETY POLICY GUIDE #3 – BEING TOGETHER

### Expectations of behaviour in our church community

Jesus told us to love one another as he loves us. As Christians we know our life together is strengthened when our behaviour is consistent with our faith. However, our experience of being together can be difficult, particularly when there are differences. So it is important to be clear about how we will behave towards each other.

#### Being a community:

- We will value the wellbeing of others.
- We will encourage each other to participate in the life of the church.
- We will consider the impact of our behaviour on others.

#### Relating to each other:

- We will treat each other with respect and dignity, irrespective of ability, gender, sexuality, race, age or contribution to the church.
- We will act with integrity and honesty in our interactions with each other.

#### Communicating with each other:

- We will communicate respectfully with others, and not in a way that threatens, belittles or humiliates.
- We will speak with integrity and honesty, and refrain from speculation and gossip.

#### Acknowledging difference:

- We will respect those who are different from us and not isolate or ridicule them.
- We will listen to and seek to understand the beliefs, opinions and practices of others, even when we do not share their views.

#### Responding to conflict:

- We will accept responsibility for our part in a conflict.
- We will be willing to play our part in resolving a conflict.

#### Promoting Safety:

- We will promote behaviours that support the physical,<sup>9</sup> psychological<sup>10</sup>, social<sup>11</sup>, spiritual<sup>12</sup> and moral<sup>13</sup> safety of all people.

(Promoting Safety added by DC January 2019 all other parts as adopted by General Synod 2014).

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<sup>9</sup> *Physical Safety - anything people need to stay alive and derive a sense of health and well-being in the world*

<sup>10</sup> *Psychological Safety - the pursuits Individuals must follow to be healthy within himself or herself and balance his or her needs with those of others*

<sup>11</sup> *Social Safety - the ability to be part of a group without experiencing or engaging In behaviours or activities that destroy the Integrity of the Individual or the group*

<sup>12</sup> *Spiritual Safety - enabling opportunities for people to learn of the riches of faith and to explore them in ways that are appropriate to their own stories and journeys*

<sup>13</sup> *Moral Safety - Operating from a system of values that are consistent, that guide behaviour, and that are founded on a deep respect for each other, all living things and God.*



## PARISH SAFETY POLICY GUIDE #4 – STANDARDS FOR CLERGY AND CHURCH WORKERS

The standards applying to clergy and church workers are contained in Faithfulness in Service. A full copy of Faithfulness in Service can be found at <http://newcastleanglican.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Faithfulness-in-Service-6th-Edition-June-2016.pdf>

They apply clergy and to church workers which means a lay person who is licensed by the bishop of a diocese, a lay person employed by the parish, a lay person in a parish who, for payment or not, holds a position or performs a function with the actual or apparent authority of a church authority or church body, including an office, position or function including leadership in a parish, or ministry as a churchwarden, member of any parish council or member of any committee constituted by a parish council.

### PUTTING FAITHFULNESS AND SERVICE INTO PRACTICE

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- 3.6 It is clergy or church worker's responsibility to be aware of and meet the standards of Faithfulness in Service.
- 3.7 If you (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) have overall authority in a church body, you are to ensure that all clergy and church workers for whom you are responsible are made aware of Faithfulness in Service.
- 3.8 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to not penalise, discriminate or take action against other clergy or church workers because of any action taken in good faith under Faithfulness in Service.

### PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

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- 4.6 If you (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) have overall authority in a church body, you are to ensure that clergy and church workers for whom you are responsible are provided with:
  - a safe working environment, including safe housing, where housing is provided;
  - opportunities to maintain and enhance their ministry skills; and
  - personal encouragement, support and regular feedback.
- 4.7 When exercising pastoral ministry you (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to act in the best interests of those to whom you are ministering. You must recognise any potential conflict of interests and take steps to resolve it.
- 4.8 When exercising pastoral ministry you (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are not inappropriately to discriminate between people.
- 4.9 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are not to disclose confidential information received in pastoral ministry to your spouse, family, friends, colleagues or any other person without the consent of the person providing the information, except where:
  - the information is known publicly;
  - as required or allowed by law; or
  - it is in the public interest (such as to avoid the risk of serious injury or harm to any person).
- 4.10 When you (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are on leave or unable to fulfil your



responsibilities through illness or any other reason, you are to make alternative arrangements for pastoral ministry.

## **CHILDREN**

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- 5.8 If you (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) have overall authority in a church body, you are to ensure that:
- proper systems for the safety and welfare of children participating in the church's pastoral ministry are implemented and maintained;
  - all applicable requirements of the civil authorities, the church authority and the church body are complied with; and
  - all clergy and church workers for whom you have responsibility and who work with children:
    - comply with all civil and Church screening and selection requirements;
    - receive regular training in child protection; and
    - are aware of the provisions of Faithfulness in Service relating to children.
- 5.9 If you (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are exercising a pastoral ministry involving children in a church body you are to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and welfare of the children in your care.
- 5.10 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to not abuse children.
- 5.11 When engaged in pastoral ministry you (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to not administer corporal punishment to children in your care.
- 5.12 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to not make available to children any prohibited material, except wine in the context of a Holy Communion service.
- 5.13 Before you (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) allow a person who is currently charged with or convicted of an offence against a child to participate in activities involving children, you are to:
- consult the Director of Professional Standards;
  - ensure that a risk assessment is undertaken; and
  - be satisfied that no child will be at an increased risk of harm.
- 5.14 If you (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) know or reasonably suspect that a child is at risk of harm from child abuse, you are to report this to the appropriate civil authorities.
- 5.15 If you (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) know or reasonably suspect that another member of the clergy or a church worker has abused a child, you are to report this to the appropriate civil authorities and the Director of Professional Standards.

## **PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR**

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- 6.3 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to not engage in:
- bullying;
  - emotional abuse;
  - harassment;



- physical abuse;
  - sexual abuse; or
  - spiritual abuse.
- 6.4 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to not abuse your spouse, children or other members of your family.
- 6.5 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to be responsible in your use of alcohol and other mind altering or addictive substances or services.
- 6.6 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to not undertake any pastoral ministry when you are impaired by alcohol or any other mind-altering or addictive substances.
- 6.7 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to not use any prohibited substance.
- 6.8 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are not to take property belonging to others, including intellectual property.
- 6.9 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are not knowingly to make statements that are false, misleading or deceptive.
- 6.10 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are not knowingly to use offensive language.
- 6.11 Without a legitimate purpose you (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to not view, possess, produce or distribute restricted material.
- 6.12 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to observe the law, other than any law that:
- is contrary to the Holy Scriptures;
  - unjustly prohibits the practice of religion; or
  - prohibits civil disobedience.

## **SEXUAL CONDUCT**

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- 7.4 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to be chaste and not engage in sex outside marriage and not engage in disgraceful conduct of a sexual nature.
- 7.5 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are not to:
- sexually abuse an adult;
  - sexually abuse a child;
  - engage in prostitution;
  - visit brothels and other places associated with the sex industry without a legitimate purpose;
  - view, possess, produce or distribute restricted material containing sex or nudity without a legitimate purpose; and
  - view, possess, produce or distribute any form of child pornography or child exploitation material.



## FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

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- 8.4 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are not to avoid payment of your just debts and family support obligations.
- 8.5 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are not to engage in tax avoidance.
- 8.6 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are not to seek personal advantage or financial gain for yourself or your family from your position or from a pastoral relationship, beyond your stipend or wage and recognised allowances and deductions.
- 8.7 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are not to allow yourself to be influenced by offers of money or financial reward.
- 8.8 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to avoid situations of conflict between your personal financial interest and your pastoral ministry responsibilities.
- 8.9 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to arrange your personal and church finances to ensure that clear account and transaction boundaries are maintained.
- 8.10 You (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) are to fully disclose and be publicly accountable for all church monies which you handle.
- 8.11 If you (as a member of the clergy or a church worker) have overall authority for financial management in a church body, you are to ensure that:
- proper systems for financial integrity and accountability are implemented and maintained;
  - all clergy and church workers for whom you have responsibility and who have authority for financial management in a church body are informed of their roles and responsibilities; and
  - all stipends, wages and allowances payable are adequate, and paid promptly and in full.



## PARISH SAFETY POLICY GUIDE #5 – MINIMUM GUIDELINES FOR MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN

*These guidelines explain and illustrate best practice and highlight practical ways to achieve it. They must be read in conjunction the Child Safety Standards found in Faithfulness in Service and also copied in Parish Safety Policy Guide #4 – Standards For Clergy And Church Workers*

*They are an extract from Faithfulness in Service. A full copy of Faithfulness in Service can be found at <http://newcastleanglican.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Faithfulness-in-Service-6th-Edition-June-2016.pdf>*

### Recognising the characteristics and effects of child abuse

5.16 You need to be aware of the signs, symptoms and characteristics of child abuse and its impact on children.

#### Characteristics and effects of child abuse

Abuse of a child can be categorised as emotional, physical, sexual, or spiritual. It can also arise from **neglect, bullying or harassment**.

The signs and symptoms can include:

- **emotional abuse**—low self esteem, apathy, an over readiness to relate to anyone even strangers, unduly aggressive behaviour, withdrawn behaviour;
- **physical abuse**—bruises, bites, burns and scalds, fractures;
- **sexual abuse**—a level of sexual knowledge or desire for either contact or distance inappropriate to the child’s age, self-harm, social isolation, and a sudden onset of soiling, wetting or other behavioural changes;
- **spiritual abuse**—low self esteem, high levels of anxiety and fear, excessive deference to a leader and isolation from former friends and family members;
- **neglect**—failure of a child to grow within the normally accepted pattern, failure of a parent or guardian to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care and supervision;
- **bullying or harassment**—low self-esteem, loss of trust in others, apathy, an over readiness to relate to anyone even strangers, unduly aggressive behaviour, withdrawn behaviour.

#### **Sexual abuse of a child is often preceded by grooming.**

The sexual abuse of a child commonly has the following characteristics:

- it usually starts with something minor and gradually builds up to more involved behaviours through a process of grooming;
- it is secretive and generally known only to the abuser and victim making it extremely difficult to detect;
- it is perpetrated by someone known to the child and/or held in a position of trust by the child or their parents or guardians; and



- it is rarely a self-contained or one-off incident but rather part of an ongoing relationship that is corrupting and distorting.

The abuse of a child commonly causes psychological and spiritual harm and is likely to lead to the impairment of their social, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and intellectual development and/or disturbed behaviour.

The effects of child abuse extend well beyond the abuser and their primary victims. The families of the victim and abusers as well as their communities can also experience a high degree of distress when revelations of abuse emerge. Often they can deny the disclosure and so reject the victim rather than face reality. Once the reality is confronted, the community will commonly experience profound shock, guilt about failing to protect the primary victim, deep hurt and disillusionment.

### **Recognising the characteristics of sexual offenders**

5.17 You need to be aware of the characteristics of sexual offenders. A sexual offender may be a friend, a family member, a neighbour, a peer, or a person in authority.

#### **Characteristics of sexual offenders**

Sexual offenders generally:

- do not stop unless there is some intervening factor;
- believe or assert that the victim is complicit or a willing participant;
- attempt to deny, justify, minimise or excuse their behaviour by:
  - claiming their behaviour was an expression of love for the victim;
  - claiming their behaviour was a result of their childhood abuse;
  - claiming their behaviour was influenced by stress, the use of alcohol or other substances; and
  - blaming the victim;
- enjoy the activity, despite claims to the contrary; and
- are repeat offenders.

Sexual offenders who target vulnerable adults and children will often undertake a grooming process as a precursor to abusive behaviour.

### **Ensuring the safety of children**

5.18 Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and welfare of children for whom you have overall responsibility or are in your care requires you to prepare a risk management plan which considers the following issues:

- screening and selection of personnel;
- your role and capacity to perform it;
- use of external service providers;
- supervision;



- planning and conduct of activities;
- venue;
- health and safety;
- transport;
- disciplinary arrangements;
- physical contact;
- communication;
- photographs and images; and
- record keeping.

These issues are considered in paragraphs 5.19 to 5.47.

### **Screening and selection of personnel**

5.19 If you have responsibility for compliance with civil and Church screening and selection requirements, you should exercise care with the selection of leaders involved in mixed age or children's activities. You should ensure that any parents or guardians assisting with these activities are screened.

5.20 Consult the Director of Professional Standards as to whether a risk assessment is required before you appoint someone who has:

- been acquitted of a charge of an offence against a child;
- had a charge of an offence against a child not proceed;
- had a prohibited status under applicable child protection legislation lifted; or
- been the subject of Church disciplinary proceedings involving child abuse.

### **Your role and capacity to perform it**

5.21 You need to recognise your own limits and not undertake any ministry that is beyond your competence or certification or that is not part of the role for which you have been or are being trained. Arrange for any such ministry to be provided by an experienced person or specialist agency. This applies particularly to outdoor or adventure activities such as canoeing, abseiling and hiking. Refer any child who requires specialised help (e.g. counselling for depression, abuse or addiction) to an appropriately qualified person or agency.

5.22 While children should be able to trust and confide in clergy and church workers—and you should expect to develop relationships of this character with children—avoid fostering inappropriate dependence on the part of a child.

5.23 Encourage children to develop leadership skills and undertake leadership roles that are appropriate for people of their age.

### **Use of external service providers**



5.24 When you engage or use an external service provider for an activity (e.g. when you engage a specialist in outdoor education or a speaker for a camp), you should:

- make reasonable enquiries as to whether they have been screened and selected in accordance with civil and any Church requirements;
- ensure that they are only used in a supplemental capacity; and
- wherever practicable, ensure that they are not left alone with any child.

### **Supervision**

5.25 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. Having multiple leaders to ensure that supervision and accountability standards are maintained is vitally important. You should:

- clearly distinguish the different levels of responsibility between you and any other supervisor and ensure that these differences are understood;
- consider the extent of supervision required taking into account: o the age, number, ability and gender mix of the children; and o the venue, time, duration and nature of the activity;
- have a register of all children with contact details and parents' or guardians' names for emergencies; and
- monitor and periodically review the application of Church child protection procedures.

### **Activities**

5.26 You should identify and minimise all potential hazards before embarking on any activity with children. This would include:

- being aware of the fire safety and evacuation procedures;
- ensuring that emergency exits on church premises are clearly marked and never obstructed or internally locked;
- not permitting smoking in any church premises where the activity is held; and
- not knowingly permitting children with serious contagious diseases to attend the activity.

5.27 Games or activities that emphasise gender, physical, intellectual or ethnic differences should be assessed for their appropriateness. Think about what message children may learn from the way events are organised and conducted.

5.28 You should review in their entirety aural and visual materials, such as videos, films, computer games, graphics, photographs and lyrics, to ensure that any elements containing violence, sexual activity or lifestyle are appropriate for the intended audience. Exercise care if a film or computer game has been recommended by the Office of Film and Literature Classification as unsuitable for viewing or playing by children of a particular age (e.g. MA, M and PG classifications). In assessing whether something is suitable you



should take into account the age of the youngest child present. If in doubt, seek the advice of a supervisor or colleague.

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

5.30 Ensure that no children's activity includes:

- secret initiation rites and ceremonies;
- nudity or engagement in sexual conduct;
- the use or availability of prohibited materials, except wine in the context of a Holy Communion service.

5.31 When taking children away from church premises, obtain the written consent of a parent or guardian and keep them informed of the place and timing of the event. If you can, include parents or guardians in a leadership team of mixed gender.

5.32 When meeting a child privately, you should:

- have parental or guardian consent, where practicable;
- ensure where appropriate that a parent, guardian or suitable adult is present;
- inform another member of the clergy, an adult church worker or another adult of the time, location and duration of the meeting;
- not invite or have children to your home or visit children in their home when no other adult is present; and
- make a record of the time, location, duration and circumstances of any meeting where it is impracticable to follow these guidelines.

## Venue

5.33 Avoid working alone or in isolation with children. You should ensure that:

- all activities have defined boundaries that are easily observed or patrolled;
- all aspects of children's activities are open to observation;
- children are not permitted to leave church premises unsupervised; and
- where individual or small group ministry is needed, it occurs in the presence of adults, a public place or a location with high visibility.

5.34 When events require children to sleep over, you should ensure that where possible:

- parents or guardians are involved in the events and their supervision;
- sleeping accommodation is segregated between males and females;
- sleeping accommodation is supervised by more than one person, preferably including a parent or guardian or another adult of each gender; and
- supervisors do not sleep in close personal proximity to a child, unless they are a parent or guardian of the child.

5.35 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.



## Health and safety

5.36 Ensure that the risk management plan 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.

5.37 Do not administer prescription medications to a child without the written consent of a parent or guardian.

5.38 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).

## Transport

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

- all drivers or operators are licensed, 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 appropriate child restraints or safety devices (e.g. seat belts, life jackets).

5.40 To the extent practicable, avoid being alone with a child in a motor vehicle or driving a child home unaccompanied. If such a situation is unavoidable, inform another adult of the trip and the reason for it.

## Discipline

5.41 If you have overall responsibility in a Church body, you should ensure that:

- there is a strategy to prevent child abuse from occurring during church activities. This includes giving age-appropriate warnings to children about their own behaviour; and
- parents or guardians are advised that abuse of any child during children's activities will not be tolerated.

5.42 If you have overall authority for children's ministry in a Church body you should ensure that a disciplinary strategy is developed, made known and implemented.

## Disciplining children

When a child's behaviour requires correction, either for the safety and welfare of themselves or the group, it is important that:

- a warning precedes any discipline, where the situation permits;
- the discipline is explained to the child;
- the child is given an opportunity to explain;
- the discipline is appropriate to the occasion and age of the child;



- the form of discipline is not corporal punishment, does not ridicule or humiliate and is not otherwise abusive;
- very young children are not isolated as a form of discipline;
- physical restraint is only used to protect children from harm or to avoid an accident;
- when physical restraint is used, a record is kept that identifies the restraint used, the member of the clergy or church worker and child involved and any witnesses, and sets out the incident's circumstances;
- the child's parents or guardians are informed of the circumstances of the incident and discipline; and
- you make a record of the circumstances of the incident and discipline.

### **Physical Contact**

5.43 In general—excluding circumstances such as immediate physical danger or medical emergency—physical contact should be initiated by the child or occur with their permission. When you make physical contact with a child, be very careful that you respect the child's feelings and privacy.

5.44 Ensure that any physical contact you 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.

### **Children and physical contact**

You need to be very careful when making physical contact with children.

Appropriate contact includes:

- bending down to the child's eye level, speaking kindly and listening attentively;
- gaining permission before hugging a child and respecting their right to refuse;
- taking a child's hand and leading them to an activity;
- comforting a child by placing an arm around their shoulder and giving a gentle squeeze from the side;
- praising or welcoming a child by holding the child's two hands in yours;
- patting the child on the head, hand, back or shoulder in affirmation; and
- holding a preschool child who is crying, provided that they want to be held.

Inappropriate contact includes:

- kissing or coaxing a child to kiss you;
- extended hugging or tickling;
- touching any area of the body normally covered by a swimming costume, specifically the buttocks, thighs, breasts or groin areas; and
- carrying older children, sitting them on your lap or having them rub up next to you.

### **Communication**



5.45 If you have overall responsibility in a Church body, you should ensure there is a policy for clergy and church workers which deals with the use of technology to communicate with children in pastoral ministry.

5.46 When considering using technology for communication, you should apply the same principles as you would in any other form of communication with children. You should take care that:

- it is an appropriate way to communicate with a child;
- it is an appropriate way to communicate about the matter;
- you are sensitive to the impact of your words, images and actions on the child and any other person who may access it;
- you do not use sexually suggestive, explicit or **offensive language** or images; and
- the circumstances of the communication, including the language and images used, do not suggest your relationship with the child is inappropriate.

### **Risks associated with using technology in communication with children**

Clergy, church workers and other participants in church activities – including children – often communicate using texting and picture messaging; email; instant messenger services and chat rooms; video conferencing; blogs and internet forums; websites; and group social networking sites.

Remember information posted online is tracked and can be retrieved. Dangers associated with the use of communication technology with children are not always appreciated by clergy and church workers. These dangers include:

- ignoring personal security settings on social networking sites;
- disclosing contact details or images of the child in the communication;
- being unable to determine if people are who they say they are;
- exposing the child to unwanted or inappropriate information;
- the child becoming a victim of cyberbullying; and
- sexual predators gaining access to the child.

Clergy and church workers can assist children to stay safe when using technology to communicate with others by:

- educating children and their parents or guardians about the risk associated with the use of this technology;
- encouraging children to exercise care in disclosing personal information about themselves and others such as their contact details;
- encouraging children to talk about anything that worries them with their parents or guardians, older siblings, friends, and clergy and church workers with whom they have a **pastoral relationship** instead of posting their problems in a chat room or blog; and
- encouraging children to talk about anything they see or experience online that worries them.



### **Photographs and images**

5.47 If you have overall authority in a church body, you should ensure that there is a policy requiring clergy and church workers to obtain the permission of relevant parents and guardians before making or using images (including photographs and videos) of children who are engaged in children's activities. The form of permission should clearly indicate the intended use of the images.

### **Record keeping**

5.48 If you have overall authority in a church body, you should ensure that any Church screening documents:

- are treated with confidentiality and never left where they can be accessed by unauthorised persons;
- where kept on computer, are password protected and stored for an indefinite period of time with access limited to authorised persons; and
- where kept in paper form, are stored separately from any other documents and locked in secure place for an indefinite period of time, with access limited to authorised persons.

5.49 If you have overall authority in a church body, you should:

- ensure that a register of attendance of children and leaders and their emergency contact details is kept for each pastoral ministry involving children;
- consider including such registers in the church archives; and
- keep and store in a secure place all permission forms and records relating to discipline and private meetings.

5.50 If you are exercising a pastoral ministry involving children in a church body, you should keep a register of attendance of the children for whom you are responsible.



## PARISH SAFETY POLICY GUIDE #6 – GRIEVANCE PROCESS

### Purpose

The Grievance Protocol describes the process to be followed when there is a grievance or conflict between two or more members of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle.

### 1 Introduction

The Anglican Diocese of Newcastle recognises that from time to time there may be a grievance or conflict between two or more members of the Diocese.

The Diocese has established a process to assist those members of the church move towards reconciliation with one another at the earliest opportunity and finds ways to resolve their dispute or find ways of sustainably living with an ongoing disagreement.

The process provides for the involvement of other Christian leaders including the Bishop when the conflict cannot be resolved. Where the Bishop is required to make a formal determination, that decision is final.

The protocol builds on the principles in the Code of Good Behaviour called *Being Together* where every member of the church undertakes to accept responsibility for their part in a conflict and to play their part in resolving a conflict.

A grievance may be categorised as a conflict and/or misunderstanding and or theological disagreement or a complaint about poor performance.

An alleged crime and/or significant professional misconduct and/or breaches of the Standards in *Faithfulness in Service* which result in a person experiencing harm are not grievances under this protocol. Those behaviours if admitted to or proven would lead to the Bishop or other authority taking formal disciplinary or protective measures under the Professional Standards Ordinance 2012 or the Clergy Discipline Ordinance 1966. Any grievance of these kinds should be reported to the Director of Professional Standards.

Where possible, grievances should be resolved with the least escalation possible, which has the maximum opportunity for restoring relationships and draws the least number of people possible into the conflict.

### 2 Theological Framework

Many people carry with them a presumption that there will be no disputes within a church community, yet the Christian scriptures are filled with stories with deep disagreement. So, rather than a presumption of no conflict, we are called to recognise that it takes a lifetime of grace to discover and live the way of unity found in Jesus prayer, 'that they may all be one' [John 17:21]

There are some very significant biblical principles for agreeing and disagreeing in love which should characterise our common life –



- Reconciliation is at the heart of the gospel – Through Christ we are reconciled to God, who gives us the ministry of reconciliation. Romans 5:1-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20
- Reconciliation with others in the church is a prelude to genuine worship - Matthew 5:23-24
- Jesus describes a process for addressing conflict and restoring relationships in the church - Matthew 18:15-22
- Groups in the early church came together to talk about their differences, to seek the Spirit’s leading as they worked for consensus - Acts 6:1-6; Acts 15:1-3
- The church needs each person’s gifts and perspectives; no one has a corner on truth - 1 Corinthians 12-14
- God’s chosen ones are to bear with one another, to forgive each other and to clothe themselves “with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony” - Colossians 3:12-17
- We are to grow in unity and maturity by speaking the truth in love - Ephesians 4:1-16
- God calls us to act and speak with respect for each other despite differences of culture or conviction - Romans 14:1-7; James 1:19; John 7:51; Ephesians 4:25-32; Matthew 7:1-5; 1 Peter 3:8, 16
- God’s people do not seek the absence of conflict but the presence of shalom, a peace based on justice. Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8; Isaiah 58; Matthew 23:23-24; Luke 4:18-191

### 3 Scope

The protocol applies to all members and church workers (ordained and non-ordained, paid and voluntary, licensed and unlicensed) who are associated with the ministry of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Newcastle.

It does not involve grievances with the Diocesan Bishop which must be in the form of a complaint and which are handled by the Episcopal Standards Commission.

This protocol assumes the members involved in the dispute are aged eighteen years or older and not classified by law as a vulnerable person.

### 4 Pathways to resolving a grievance

The Diocese commits to a case-by-case approach to the resolution of substantive issues in a grievance and, where possible, the appropriate restoration of relationships between all parties.

The pathway employed will depend upon:

- a) the nature of the conflict situation and/ or grievance
- b) the positions/ roles of the parties involved
- c) the skills and/or capacity of the local church leader to address the situation.

The pathway employed does not prevent the parties to the grievance seeking independent advice at any time, should they choose to do so.



A grievance has potential to escalate, causing significant relational wounds. For this reason, the person who is managing the grievance is responsible not only to communicate clearly with involved parties, but also to provide appropriate communication to all persons affected directly by the dispute.

Members not directly involved in the resolution of a dispute are advised not to discuss the matter except with the person who is managing the grievance.

In the case of a significant conflict, the Bishop may arrange for independent support to be available to the parish to assist those indirectly impacted persons to heal relationships and prevent ongoing division and mistrust within the parish.

All parties to a grievance/complaint and all involved in seeking the resolution of the grievance/complaint must act as expeditiously as possible in undertaking their roles in relation to ensure that the time taken to undertake this process does not contribute unreasonably to escalation of the conflict and possible harm to those involved.

The process allows for an escalation of a grievance if it remains unresolved.

The final stage involves an agreement to be bound by the decision of the Bishop who, on the advice of an independent arbiter, will make a final and binding determination. The process envisages that everyone will take the earliest opportunity to reach agreement around resolution and, where possible and appropriate, reconciliation.

## PROCESS

### 1. *Can the parties agree to resolve the conflict themselves?*

In the first instance, where conflict arises between people and they feel able to express their concern safely, they are to go to one another and express their concern with a view to resolving their differences directly. Where people go in gentleness, patience and humility, with the resolve not to ascribe fault and take responsibility for their part in a conflict and its resolution, they often find that a dispute is resolved quickly, and a relationship restored.

### 2. *Local Resolution*

1. If any person feels for any reason that they require help in resolving the situation they may speak privately to their Incumbent (Parish Priest or Chaplain), provided he or she is not a stakeholder in the grievance or conflict, to request assistance in addressing it. In most cases, the leader to guide the resolution of the conflict will be the Incumbent. However, a suitably skilled person may fulfil this role with the agreement of the Incumbent (or with the agreement of the Bishop if there is no Incumbent, or if the Incumbent is a stakeholder in the conflict) [**The Incumbent or other person is known in this process as “the assisting person”**].
2. Provided that the assisting person feels comfortable in assisting those impacted, and:



- all parties involved in the conflict or grievance are willing to work towards restoring relationships
  - the conflict is still at a low level (e.g. all parties are still amicable and able to talk calmly together) and all parties want to restore their relationship, then the assisting person will:
    - i. meet with each party separately  
During private meetings the assisting person is to ensure that all parties are given a chance to tell their side of the story in private, and to work through the underlying concerns in moving towards resolution. In this process, this is called resolution facilitation.
    - ii. clearly communicate to each party the process to be used during resolution meetings and keep records of meetings and agreements
    - iii. hold resolution meetings with all the parties to work through the issues and determine the course of action and desired outcomes, bearing in mind all material (substantive) issues, including relational issues
    - iv. follow up the parties with a view to ensuring that the solutions are implemented
    - v. monitor the situation.
    - vi. Over time check with the parties to ensure the resolution is continuing to work well for all.
    - vii. The assisting person, with the agreement of the Incumbent or their Assistant Bishop or Archdeacon, may communicate something of the resolution to indirectly affected parties.
3. At any stage throughout the process, the assisting person, or any party may contact their Assistant Bishop (or the Archdeacon of Newcastle for Newcastle City parishes and Archdeacon for Justice Ministries for the Chaplains) for assistance or resourcing without being deemed as breaking confidentiality.
4. The relevant Assistant Bishop or Archdeacon and assisting person shall provide a brief written summary report to the Bishop at the end of the resolution meeting.

### **3. *Diocesan Resolution***

A grievance or complaint may be referred to the Bishop to seek Diocesan intervention and resolution.

It can be referred by the Incumbent, an assisting person, the relevant Assistant Bishop (or the Archdeacon) or any party to the conflict.

A grievance or conflict should be referred, when the grievance or conflict:

- is with the Incumbent or local church leader
- has escalated beyond the capacity of an assisting person (or Incumbent) to resolve the substantive and or relational issues
- requires the input and assistance of an independent advisor

The Bishop will determine the best person(s) to assist the parties towards resolution.



The parties involved need to be advised that, as the process progresses, they remain free to seek help from outside the Diocese if they feel the conflict is not being resolved.

The Diocese commits to a prayerful case-by-case approach to each matter.

### **3.1 Assessment**

Upon receiving a request to assist with addressing a grievance or a conflict, the Bishop or a person appointed by the Bishop<sup>2</sup> will make an initial assessment of the situation. This may include a review of correspondence, and holding briefing meetings with the parties to:

- understand the history and status of the conflict/grievance
- ascertain their willingness to address the grievance or conflict
- determine each person's conflict resolution style and preferences regarding an ideal pathway for resolution
- make judgements as to the intensity level of conflict
- determine the substantive issues.

The Bishop or the person appointed by the Bishop may also seek advice, including consulting with a relevant professional as part of this assessment.

The Bishop or the person appointed by the Bishop must refer any professional standards matter to the Director of Professional Standards.

### **3.2 Options Report**

The Bishop or a person appointed by the Bishop will arrange for an Options Report to be prepared. This Report must include an outline of key issues, the type of conflict, the options for resolution and the preferred pathway. The report will contain a recommended course of action.

The recommendation must also give due consideration to the resources required for the recommended pathway. Possible pathways that may be recommended include, but are not limited to:

- dismissal of the complaint/grievance
- resolution facilitation.
- counselling
- conciliation
- mediation
- arbitration
- use of the Ministry Issues Procedures in the Clerical Ministry Ordinance 2009.

### **3.3 Consideration by the Bishop**

The report will be referred to the Bishop for consideration together with any other advice or submissions made by key stakeholders.



The Bishop shall determine the resolution pathway that will be employed for this grievance/complaint.

Unless the Bishop determines otherwise, the cost for preparing any report and the cost of implementing the resolution pathway must be met by the parish in which the grievance/complaint is raised.

### **3.4 Implementation**

The resolution pathway is implemented.

During the implementation, the Bishop may make, amend or modify decisions. Any decision by the Bishop will be communicated to all parties.

### **3.5 Ongoing monitoring**

The Bishop, or a person appointed by the Bishop, in negotiation with the parties, is to check on the wellbeing of all parties to the grievance/complaint until the Bishop is satisfied that the solutions that have been employed are working.

This may include communication to indirectly affected persons if appropriate.

## **4: External Resolution**

When the Bishop determines that the grievance/complaint should be resolved by arbitration then the Bishop will appoint an arbiter.

The parties to a grievance must indicate in writing their agreement to abide by the final decision of the Bishop made on the recommendation of the arbiter.

All parties to the conflict are then to assist the arbiter understand the grievance/complaint in such manner as the arbiter determines. Depending on the type of conflict and issues involved, this step may take several meetings and some time to work through.

The arbiter will advise the Bishop of her/his decision.

The Bishop may accept or refer the decision of the arbiter back to the arbiter for further consideration.

Once the Bishop has accepted the arbiter's decision it will be communicated to all parties and regarded as final. The Bishop shall authorise the implementing of the arbiter's determination.

Where the parties do not agree to abide by the final decision of the Bishop made on the recommendation of the arbiter, the Bishop shall make such decisions as he believes will assist the



wellbeing of as many people as possible who are parties to the grievance/conflict. Such decisions shall be final.

## **5 Protocol Administration**

### **6.1 Protocol Communication**

This protocol will be communicated in February each year to clergy and church workers in the Diocese of Newcastle by email.

### **6.2 Protocol Review**

This protocol will be reviewed in October each year by the Diocesan Council and the Bishop.

### **6.3 Related documents**

The Diocesan Safe Ministry Policy

The Diocesan Code of Conduct: Faithfulness in Service

The Professional Standards Ordinance

The Clerical Ministry Ordinance 2009

Diocesan Faithfulness in Service Investigations Protocol

Diocesan Protocol for Responding to Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

“Being Together”



## **PARISH SAFETY POLICY GUIDE #7 – MINISTRY CLEARANCE FORMS**

The Diocese has determined that from 1 April 2019 all clergy seeking a licence in the Diocese must complete the Safe Ministry Check authorised by the General Synod as well as apply for a licence using the Diocesan Information form.

From 1 June 2019 the General Synod Safe Ministry Check for volunteers and youth volunteers must be completed.

Where a person has previously completed the General Synod Safe Ministry Check they are not required to complete it when their licence or authority requires renewal.

People should check the Diocesan Website for the correct forms and licensing information.

<https://www.newcastleanglican.org.au/safe-ministry/implementation-guides-parish-safety/safe-ministry-screening-and-ministry-clearance-requirements/>

### **ONGOING**

A member of the clergy who is aged over 80 may apply for a limited Permission to Officiate. This ministry may only be exercised in the presence of another priest who has been subject to full clearances and has completed the required Safe Ministry Training.

### **RETIRED AND IN GOOD STANDING**

The Diocese will maintain and publish a list of clergy who have retired, do not seek a licence or permission for ministry, and remain in good standing.