

# Safe Ministry Responsibilities

## Responsibilities of the senior minister: Andrew Barry

1. **COMPLETE TRAINING**
2. **IMPLEMENT** the Safe Ministry Policy
3. **APPOINT**, a Safe Ministry Representative with the agreement of the Parish Council
4. **COMPLY** with the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW), other State legislation and the diocesan Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020.
5. **MEET** regularly with the Safe Ministry Representative to review the implementation of the safe ministry policies
6. **MONITOR** all basic health and safety issues particularly in rooms used by children and vulnerable adults with the Safe Ministry Representative and Parish Council.
7. **REPORT** suspicions and allegations to the relevant authorities.
8. **FULFIL** responsibilities as required by Faithfulness in Service

## The Safe Ministry Representative: Kelly Peters

The senior minister, he can ***delegate the day- to-day work of ensuring compliance*** with legal and diocesan requirements to the Safe Ministry Representative.

### Safe Ministry Representative must:

- be 21 years or older,
- have completed Safe Ministry training
- hold a Working With Children Check
- have completed a Safe Ministry Assessment
- have an email account (for administrative purposes), have good administrative skills, and
- be capable of maintaining a computer spreadsheet.

### Additional (but not required):

- professional training or expertise in child protection issues
- not a member of the parish staff Upon the appointment of a Safe Ministry Representative, the parish must promptly notify the Sydney Diocesan Registry of their details.

## **Responsibility a Safe Ministry Representative:**

**ASSIST THE SENIOR MINISTER** to comply with the child protection screening requirements,

**KEEP RECORDS** of Working With Children Checks, Safe Ministry Training, and Safe Ministry Assessments.

**MONITOR AND REPORT** on safe ministry systems and practices in the parish

**REPORT ANY ABUSE.**

## **Legal and diocesan requirements:**

**KEEP RECORDS** *The Safe Ministry Representative* must keep records of:

### **1. All WWCC clearances**

For each worker in child-related work the parish must keep the following records (either electronic or hardcopy):

- Full name,
- Date of birth,
- WWCC number,
- Verification date (the date the parish verified them),
- Verification outcome (clearance or bar),
- Name of the person who did the verification,
- Expiry date (when the WWCC number expires), and
- Status of the worker (paid or volunteer).

### **2. Safe Ministry training**

Records must include:

- Safe Ministry Training – date of last training (date on certificate)
- *Safe Ministry Training – expiry date*
- Safe Ministry Training – course name
- *Safe Ministry Training – certificate number*
- Ministry position
- *The date they started in their role in the church*

**NOTE:** Since the introduction of the Safe Ministry To Children Ordinance 2020, the **Safe Ministry for Junior Leaders course is mandatory for leaders aged between 13 & 17 years** – unless 16-17 year olds opt to do Essentials (with parental and church leadership approval).

Under the Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020 clergy and church workers (paid or volunteer) are required to complete accredited safe ministry training no later than three years from the date of their previous training.

A record of each person's previous safe ministry training date is always visible in their 'Course Dashboard' page of their safe ministry account.

When the safe ministry training expiry date approaches for an existing worker in your church, they should:

**Leaders must make every effort to complete the Refresher course BEFORE the expiry date.**

If this is impossible to comply with, they should complete the Refresher course within 30 days after their certificate expiry date. Note: where training is completed online, all aspects of the course must be finalised and a certificate received prior to the 30 day grace period expiring.

**If a Refresher course is not completed within 30 days after their certificate expiry date, the leader should step down from their ministry role(s), and complete the Essentials course again before resuming their role.**

### **3. Safe Ministry Check**

Records must include:

- a. Result of processing of SMC (cleared/not cleared)
- b. Date clearance is granted/not granted (date field)
- c. Name of person processing clearance (Senior Minister or his Authorised Delegate)

*The Safe Ministry Representative* must establish:

1. a reliable system or procedure to remind themselves of impending expiry dates of WWCC clearances
2. a reliable system or procedure to remind themselves of the dates Refresher training is required
3. A process to alert the Safe Ministry Representative when the person is approaching their 18th birthday. A WWCC can be obtained once the person reaches 17 years and 9 months.
4. Follow up on those matters with the leaders.

The minimum information that must be kept in Core SM data for each person who is cleared to work with children in your church is:

- Full name
- Any other name they are known by
- Gender
- Email address
- Phone numbers – more than one preferred.

- Date of birth (DOB)
- WWCC number
- WWCC Expiry date
- *WWCC Verification date*
- *WWCC Verification result*
- *WWCC Verification made by*
- Safe Ministry Training – date of last training (date on certificate)
- *Safe Ministry Training – expiry date*
- Safe Ministry Training – course name
- *Safe Ministry Training – certificate number*
- Ministry position
- *The date they started in their role in the church*
- Safe Ministry Check – Date of clearance/non-clearance
- *Safe Ministry Check – Result of SMC (Cleared or Not Cleared)*
- *Safe Ministry Check – Name of person processing the form (the minister involved, not an admin person)*

### **Extended Safe Ministry Records.**

These documents are required to be store ***indefinitely***.

- a. attendance and permission papers,
- b. Safe Ministry Training certificates
- c. miscellaneous notes pertaining to individuals
- d. copy of each volunteer's SMC,
- e. related ID documents and
- f. any related references

Legal advice is that churches should store completed SMC forms and any references connected to those forms indefinitely. For this reason ***we strongly recommend storing them electronically***. This can be as scanned copies of the paper forms in PDF format, or as full-electronic versions of the form and referee forms.

**MONITOR** on safe ministry systems and practices in the parish including all basic health and safety issues in order to avoid obvious hazards on church property, particularly in rooms used by children and vulnerable adults

**REPORT** provide an annual report to the parish council that addresses current safe ministry policies and practices, and any suggested changes to improve the current practices in the parish.

### **REPORT ABUSE**

The Safe Ministry Representative must ensure that any child abuse that they become aware of is reported to the relevant authorities. The Safe Ministry Representative may become aware of abuse because they have observed indicators of abuse, another person has informed them of their concerns for a child or a child has told them that they are being abused.

## Selection and screening of leaders

A person who wishes to undertake ministry to children must:

1. Complete a **Safe Ministry Check** and submit this for assessment with the Senior Minister or his delegate
2. Obtain a **WWCC clearance** that must then be verified by the parish.
3. **Make a formal application for the children's ministry position, including producing proof of identity documents and providing references.**
4. Undertake **Safe Ministry training** prior to undertaking ministry to children, followed by a Refresher course every three years. **There is no longer any grace period for Safe Ministry Training prior to a person starting to work with children.**
5. Read, understand, and comply with **Faithfulness in Service**
6. Be provided with a job description and copy of relevant Safe Ministry blueprint document

It is recommended that all volunteers are a member of a parish for at least 6 months before undertaking ministry to children in that parish. This provides time for a person's character and suitability for such a role to be observed.

### Legal requirements

Compliance with these legal requirements is the ***responsibility of the senior minister, although this task can be delegated to the Safe Ministry Representative.***

### Working With Children Checks

Anyone intending to work with children in NSW, including volunteers, must get a WWCC.

"Child-related work" (including voluntary work) is:

Providing services for under 18's:

- **Where the work normally involves being face to face with children**
- **Where contact is more than incidental to the work**

(Excluding workers who are under 18 years of age).

**The senior minister, any assistant ministers and lay ministers of a parish must have a WWCC clearance** even if they do not have face to face contact with children.

**Any and every person engaged in child-related work in a parish must either:**

- hold a Working With Children Check clearance that has been verified with the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian and is not subject to a bar,
- have a current Working With Children Check application before the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, or
- be subject to an exemption.

**There are two steps in the process:**

1. The worker must apply for a WWCC clearance, **and**

2. The parish must verify that the worker has a WWCC clearance.

If an applicant is barred, it is an offence to engage the person in child-related work. If an applicant is barred, the Safe Ministry Representative is to immediately advise the senior minister who must stop their involvement in all child-related work and notify the Office of the Director of Safe Ministry that they are barred.

**A WWCC is not required:**

*It is recommended that parishes do not rely on these exemption as a matter of course due.*

- where contact with children is not face-to-face or is only incidental to the work (such as serving morning tea to children after Sunday School, warden, parish councillor).
- Workers under the age of 18
- Workers in administrative, clerical, maintenance or ancillary roles if the work does not ordinarily involve contact with children for extended periods. (such as a parish secretary or grounds-keeper),
- Workers working for not more than a total of five working days in a calendar year if the work involves **minimal direct contact with children** or where the work is supervised when children are present.
- **A visiting speaker** or performer for a one-off occasion who will be in the presence of one or more adults,
- **Short-term emergencies** where the engagement of the worker is necessary in the circumstances to prevent an increased risk to the safety of children and the engagement is **not for more than five consecutive** working days. The parish cannot rely on the same person on more than five occasions.
- **A parent or close relative of a child**, who is connected with an activity of which the child is a member or usually participates. A close relative means a sibling, grandparent, aunt or uncle, niece or nephew (or an equivalent step-relative). (Note: There are some exceptions to this for certain types of roles.

It is recommended that parishes do not rely on this exemption as a matter of course, as the risk of engaging in child abuse is not diminished by a person being a parent or close relative of a child in the group and because there are exceptions to this exception which make it more complicated to ensure proper compliance.

Parishes may find that the administration involved in keeping track of exemptions is more burdensome than adopting a simple policy that every person involved in child-related work must obtain a WWCC.

There is also a risk that the grounds on which a person qualifies for an exemption may change over time. A parish could end up in a position where someone who is no longer entitled to an exemption is undertaking child-related work without a WWCC.

For more information about who is exempt from needing a WWCC you can refer to the Office of the Children's Guardian website. <https://ocg.nsw.gov.au>

**What if the applicant is from outside of NSW?**

If someone is visiting from interstate and working with children for fewer than 30 days no WWCC is required provided they hold an equivalent clearance/check or exemption in the jurisdiction from which they have come.

If someone has moved from interstate or overseas the person will require a WWCC and parishes should also consider obtaining a criminal record check from the state or country from which they have relocated. A parish will need the person's permission in order to do so.

**NOTE:** It is important to be clear that under the new Ordinance, the following are required **BEFORE** a person can start volunteering to work with children:

- A current, verified WWCC
- Current Safe Ministry Training
- A clearance to work with children from a Safe Ministry Check