

# SAFE CHURCH COMMUNITIES – July 2009

*For distribution to clergy, coordinators, children's, families and youth leaders, seminar facilitators, newsletter editors*

13 July 2009

Dear everyone

In this month's letter I am responding to a number of queries that Margaret and I have received from people busy implementing the Safe Church Communities Program in parishes.

First of all, let me congratulate you for all the hard work you are doing to make sure that our parishes continue to be safe and healthy communities. Margaret and I are really encouraged by your enthusiasm and commitment. One of the lovely things that has happened to us a number of times following a training session is participants coming up to us to say, "I really enjoyed that!"

## Frequently Asked Questions

With this letter is an attachment called 'Frequently Asked Questions'. This has built on a document handed out at Synod in May and aims to provide answers to common queries. Please read it and keep it as a reference. **Please let us know if your question is not there so that we can keep this up to date with the information you need!** It will be up on [www.anglicantas.org.au/about-safechurch](http://www.anglicantas.org.au/about-safechurch) so it's important that it's a useful document.

## 'Faithfulness in Service' Training Module F1

You'll be pleased to know that the training booklet can now be downloaded from [www.anglicantas.org.au/about-safechurch](http://www.anglicantas.org.au/about-safechurch) or is available from the Diocesan Office. Also on the website is an updated version of 'Faithfulness in Service'. **Please note that the current version has 'Revised 2009' on the front cover.** This is the version to use, as the section on Children has been updated to reflect the change from Safe Ministry to Safe Church Communities. The training booklet can be used individually or as a group, e.g. with the Parish Council, or Margaret or I can run a session in your parish.

## ChildSafe Forms

These are all available on [www.anglicantas.org.au/about-safechurch](http://www.anglicantas.org.au/about-safechurch) and can be downloaded as you need them. They have the ChildSafe logo at the top and a Diocesan footer to show that they are part of our Safe Church Communities Program.

At this stage we have not uploaded the forms that have the Diocesan footer on Safety Management Online so please use the forms that you will find under Resource as a reference only. **For handing out, please use those on [www.anglicantas.org.au/about-safechurch](http://www.anglicantas.org.au/about-safechurch).**

## Safety Management Online (SMO)

We are having a few problems with this site. ChildSafe are working on an updated version of SMO and assure us that the new version will address these. Please contact us with any difficulties so that we can keep ChildSafe informed.

## ChildSafe Training Modules

The PowerPoint presentations for face to face training can be downloaded from SMO. They are found under Resource, then Coordinator. The comprehensive training notes to accompany the PowerPoint presentations are found in the Coordinator Handbook.

Lots of information to absorb! Please keep in touch with us – we love to hear from you and value your feedback (telephone 6220 2025, leave a message if we're not in the office).

Yours sincerely

Margaret Savage  
Safe Church Communities Administrator  
[margaret.savage@anglicantas.org.au](mailto:margaret.savage@anglicantas.org.au)

Anne Foot  
Director of Professional Standards  
[dps@anglicantas.org.au](mailto:dps@anglicantas.org.au)

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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*(Everything you wanted to know but were afraid to ask!)*

## ***What is the Safe Church Communities Program that operates throughout the Anglican Diocese of Tasmania?***

It is a program of endorsement to ensure that those in leadership roles in parishes have the skills and knowledge to develop safe and healthy church communities.

## ***What does Safe Church Communities Endorsement mean?***

It means that those people who have been endorsed have undergone the necessary checks and training to equip them for the leadership role to which they have been called.

- All those people who are involved in providing programs for children and/or young people are required to have a current National Police Check (renewed every three years), to fill out the relevant paper work and to complete ChildSafe training at the relevant level. Clergy, Youth Pastors, Children's and Youth Leaders and ChildSafe Coordinators are required to have a National Register Check.
- Those leaders who do not have a role with children and/or young people are required to complete training in the code of conduct 'Faithfulness in Service' and to sign a commitment to the code.
- Those engaged in personal/one to one ministry, e.g. pastoral ministry, are required to complete training in the code of conduct 'Faithfulness in Service', to sign a commitment to the code, to provide two complete referee forms and have a National Register Check.

## ***What is ChildSafe?***

ChildSafe is a product which provides standards, guidelines and training materials for people working with children, young people and families. ChildSafe seeks to address core issues in safety and care and helps leaders adopt good risk management practices. It is used nationally by Scripture Union and in a range of churches and church organisations. It has also been developed in consultation with the National Council of Churches Safe Church Project Training Agreement.

## ***What is Faithfulness in Service (FIS)?***

This code is intended to identify the personal behaviour and practices of pastoral ministry that will enable clergy and church workers to serve faithfully the people they minister to. It is based on Faithfulness in Service as adopted by the General Synod, October 2004, and last revised by General Synod Standing Committee March 2006. If this behaviour and these practices are followed, our communities will be safer places for everyone, where integrity is honoured, people take responsibility for their behaviour and forgiveness encourages healing and does not hide misconduct.

## ***What about the Safe Ministry Program that has been operating throughout the Diocese?***

The Safe Church Communities Program replaces the Safe Ministry Program. There are many similarities between the two programs. The new program aims to:

- Build on the previous Safe Ministry program;
- Continue to create safe and healthy church environments;
- Maintain a user-friendly process of training and endorsement;
- Ensure that the training fits the role performed; and
- Reflects the latest research.

## ***I am the Safe Ministry Coordinator for my parish? What do I do now?***

Your new title will be Safe Church Communities Officer. Your new role is to:

- Be the contact person for Safe Church Communities matters;
- To maintain the parish records for the Safe Church Communities Program; and
- To assist the parish leadership team in maintaining a safe and healthy church community.

Margaret Savage and Anne Foot at the Diocesan Office on telephone 6220 2025 are able to help you with any questions or problems you may have.

## ***I have heard mention of a ChildSafe Coordinator. Where does this fit in?***

If you have programs for children and young people in your parish you will need a ChildSafe Coordinator. This person has the responsibility to see that all those helping in these programs have completed the relevant ChildSafe training and the endorsement process and that the programs are safe for those involved. The Safe Church Communities Officer and the ChildSafe Coordinator can be the same person or two different people working together.

## ***How does ChildSafe training take place?***

The Diocesan Office will organise and run training sessions when required but training can also be run by the ChildSafe Coordinator, using the comprehensive training resources provided by ChildSafe. ChildSafe Handbooks are available from the Diocesan Office. There is also the capacity to complete training modules online. Margaret on telephone 6220 2025 at the Diocesan Office can discuss this option with you.

## ***How does Faithfulness in Service training take place?***

A copy of the Code can be downloaded from [www.anglicantas.org.au/about-safechurch](http://www.anglicantas.org.au/about-safechurch) . Please make sure that the copy you are using has 'Revised 2009' on the front cover. The information in the Section on Children has been updated.

A copy of the Faithfulness In Service Module F1 Training booklet can also be downloaded from [www.anglicantas.org.au/about-safechurch](http://www.anglicantas.org.au/about-safechurch) . This can be used individually or as group and is done at the parish level. Training could also be facilitated by Margaret or Anne. Please contact them at the Diocesan Office on telephone 6220 2025.

***I have had Safe Ministry Accreditation in the past but I need to renew it. What do I need to do?***

Does your current role on the parish involve working with children and/or young people?

If your answer is **yes**, you will need to:

- Fill out the Volunteer Application Form;
- Provide two completed Referee Forms;
- Provide a current National Police Check; and
- Complete the relevant ChildSafe training

The forms are available on [www.anglicantas.org.au/about-safechurch](http://www.anglicantas.org.au/about-safechurch), from your ChildSafe Coordinator or from the Diocesan Office. The National Police Check Application is also available from the Diocesan Office. If you are a Team Leader or a Coordinator you will also need a National Register Check.

If your answer is **no**, you will need to complete the 'Faithfulness in Service' (FIS) training module F1 and sign a commitment to try and live your life according to the code. This is a one off process.

Those of you who are involved in pastoral ministry or one to one ministry such as prayer ministry will need to complete the 'Faithfulness in Service' training module F1 and sign a commitment to try and live your life according to the code. You will also need to provide two referees and have a National Register Check.

***I hold a Bishop's Licence. What do I need to do for current Safe Church Communities Endorsement?***

If you hold a Bishop's Licence under sections 3(a) & (b) of the Clerical Licences Ordinance 1991 (Amended 1997, 2009) you will be required to complete both FIS training and ChildSafe training, according to Schedule 1 of the Safe Church Communities Ordinance 2009.

Both these Ordinances can be found on the Diocesan Website [www.anglicantas.org.au](http://www.anglicantas.org.au).

If you hold a Lay Ministries Licence (see Section 3A & 3B of the Clerical Licences Ordinance) you will need to complete the FIS training module F1 and sign a commitment to try and live your life according to the code. If you have a role with children and/or young people you will also need to complete the ChildSafe training to a relevant level, provide a current National Police Check and other paper work. You may also need a National Register Check.

***My Safe Ministry Accreditation is current. Do I need to do anything?***

No. When your accreditation is due for renewal you need to follow the process required for your particular role as outlined in the information above.

***I have a current clearance to work with children from the Education Department of Tasmania. Do I still have to get a National Police Check?***

No – as long as your clearance is current and is updated when it runs out. Safe Church Communities Endorsement requires a National Police Check/working with children clearance to be renewed every three years.

***I have an interstate Working with Children Card. Do I still have to apply for a National Police Check?***

No - as long as the Working with Children Card is current and is updated when it runs out or you then apply for a National Police Check. Safe Church Communities Endorsement requires a National Police Check/working with children clearance to be renewed every three years.

***I have moved from an Anglican parish interstate and have current Safe Ministry endorsement from the Safe Ministry Program operating in that Diocese. Can I simply transfer across?***

Please contact Margaret or Anne at the Diocesan Office on telephone 6220 2025 to discuss the process in which you have participated. They will advise you if you need to do anything further to give you a current Safe Church Communities Endorsement.

***I have completed ChildSafe training with Scripture Union/another denomination or organisation. Do I have to do it all again?***

That's what's so great about using training that is used by other churches and organisations. All we need is for you to give us information from the church or organisation to show what training you have completed or give permission for that church or organisation to disclose your information to us, so that we can update our Safety Management Online (the ChildSafe online management system).

***We are about to implement a program for children and young people in our parish. This is our first initiative in this area. What do we need to do?***

Please contact Margaret or Anne at the Diocesan Office on telephone 6220 2025 and they will help you get everyone appropriately ChildSafe trained and all the right processes in place.

***I have been told that I need to have a National Register Check. What is that?***

At General Synod 2007, the *National Register Canon* was adopted. The primary purpose of the Canon is to establish a National Professional Standards Register of all clergy and lay Church workers against whom a **notifiable complaint** has been made unless it is **exhausted**.

Information is placed on the Register – in accordance with the relevant protocol approved by General Synod – by the Director of Professional Standards forwarding the information to the General Secretary by electronic means with suitable encryption.

There are three reasons why information about clergy and lay workers will be placed on the Register:

- a **notifiable complaint** has been made against a person; or
- there has been in relation to a person
  - an adverse **working with children** check
  - an **adverse criminal history** check

- an **adverse Safe Ministry Check**; or
- a person has not been ordained as a deacon, a priest or a bishop; or issued with a licence or appointed by a church authority because of an adverse risk assessment.

A **notifiable complaint** is a complaint which is consistent with the relevant diocesan canon or protocol and which has been communicated to the person concerned. In the Diocese of Tasmania, a notifiable complaint is one which relates to:

- (a) alleged conduct of a Church worker wherever or whenever occurring involving
  - (i) any form of unwanted sexual behaviour, whether by act or words including sexual harassment or sexual assault;
  - (ii) viewing child pornography including providing it or showing it to others;
  - (iii) any form of sexual behaviour involving a minor including showing or providing pornography to a minor;
- (b) alleged conduct of a sexual nature by:
  - (i) a member of the clergy or
  - (ii) a Church worker undertaking a ministry role or position, occurring within a pastoral relationship, which is inconsistent with the standards to be observed by the clergy and Church workers undertaking a ministry role or position, having regard to the Code of Conduct. (Schedule 5 Ministry & Tribunal Ordinance 1998- Faithfulness in Service)

The Diocese has strict protocols for access to the National Register to protect individual's privacy.

For complete information, the *National Register Canon* and the Protocols are available on the Anglican Church of Australia website – [www.anglican.org.au](http://www.anglican.org.au)

The Professional Standards Committee, established by the Diocese under *The Professional Standards for the Protection of Children and Adults from Sexual Misconduct Ordinance 2006*, requires that the names of all stipendiary clergy, those holding a Bishop's licence, Youth Leaders, whether paid or unpaid, those at the Safe Church Communities Coordinator level and those people with a personal/pastoral ministry are checked against the National Register.

**Please note** that this check is not something to be concerned about. Not later than one month after information has been placed on the Register, the General Secretary is required to inform the person that information relating to that person is on the Register, i.e. you will know if there is information about you on the National Register. It is simply a further step in ensuring our parishes are safe and healthy environments.

### ***We have not bothered about any of this stuff before. Why now?***

The Anglican Diocese of Tasmania is fully committed to ensuring that its church environments are healthy and safe places for children, young people and adults to grow and mature in their faith.

To achieve this we need to equip everyone in leadership roles with the right skills and knowledge.

We believe that the Safe Church Communities Program is the best way of making sure this happens.

# Anglican Diocese of Tasmania - a healthy church...transforming life

## Safe Church Communities

**Are you a Church Worker, paid or unpaid, in the Anglican Church?**

**CHURCH WORKER**  
paid or unpaid  
Transition Period 2009 -2011

**NOTE**

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Youth Group Leader, Kids' Club, Sunday School, Holiday Club, child care for church programs.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. prayer ministry, counselling, pastoral care.

