



Safe Ministry Protocol and Guidelines for Screening

Adopted by Bishop in Council 14 June 2022



Protocol for Screening

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

Proverbs 31:8-9

A. Purpose and Scope

This Protocol outlines the screening requirements for all Diocesan church workers i.e., clergy, lay, licensed, unlicensed, paid, or unpaid, including all volunteers in Diocesan Parishes and Diocesan Boards and Committees, and the process for undertaking the required screening requirements.

The Screening Guidelines are consistent with good practice and outline the necessary requirements to ensure compliance with the standards for screening in the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 of General Synod (adopted by the Diocese) and relevant state legislation.

B. Our Commitment

Our Diocese is committed to **Safe Ministry**.

We are committed to being person-valuing and respectful spaces, free from abuse and harm, to God’s glory. This means that we commit to our pastoral, duty of care, legal and governance obligations with the goal that all ministries are spiritually, emotionally, and physically safe.

We are mindful of the work involved in the implementation of rigorous appointment processes, but we know that this work makes a vital contribution to the safety and well-being of vulnerable people in our parishes. We must ensure we have done all that is reasonably practicable to ensure we have safe church workers as they have positions of leadership, power, and trust.

C. Principles that guide this Protocol

1. **Scripture** – we use Jesus words laid down in the Bible as our guide
2. **Duty of care** – we must do all that is reasonably practical to ensure people are safe and unharmed
3. **Accountability** – we will show that we have done all we can to ensure vulnerable people are being ministered to by safe church workers.
4. **Partnership** – we work together across the Diocese to ensure we support and learn from each other in implementing best practice in safe ministry.
5. **Continuous review and improvement** – we regularly review and improve our practice in this area to ensure that it remains current and effective.

D. Screening requirements

The requirements for different types of church workers are outlined in ‘**Required Screenings by Role**’ tables in the Diocesan Screening Guidelines. They vary according to role and whether the church worker is involved in ministry to children, as defined in the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017, where a person:

- (a) *is required to hold a working with children check by reason that the person has contact with a child as part of engaging in a regulated activity; or*
- (b) *exercises a pastoral ministry which has direct, regular, and not incidental contact with children; or*
- (c) *provides services to children that are ancillary to the exercise of a pastoral ministry within*

paragraph (b) which involve:

- i) contact with children during an overnight activity (such as camps and similar activities);*
or
- ii) close, personal contact with children (such as changing clothes, washing and toileting);* or
- (d) supervises the ministry of a person within any one or more of paragraphs (a) to (c);* or
- (e) performs a professional standards role;* or
- (f) performs a safe ministry role*

E. Implementation

1. Bishop-in-Council is responsible for oversight of the implementation of this Protocol.
2. The Diocesan Screening Guidelines constitute the implementation process for this Protocol.
3. Parish Safe Ministry Coordinators have a vital role in the implementation of this Protocol.
4. With the exception of SRE Authorisation, which must be renewed annually, all Diocesan screening checks required by this Protocol are valid for 3 years, and are acceptable across all parishes, Diocesan agencies and boards, unless an applicant is applying for a role which requires a higher level of screening (see the Diocesan Screening Guidelines) or otherwise required by law or rule of the Anglican Church (e.g. WWCC).
5. All screening documentation, related to this Protocol will be held by the Diocese on the Safety Management Online (SMO) site where it can be accessed and updated by the relevant Parish Safe Ministry Coordinators.
6. The Safe Ministry Check forms and declarations are available on the Diocesan website.

F. Documents and programs used to support this protocol

- Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017
- Anglican National Register Canon 2007
- Safe Ministry Policy 2014
- Faithfulness in Service
- Diocesan Screening Guidelines
- Safe Ministry Check – Ordained Ministry or appointment as a Paid, or Licensed Church Worker
- Safe Ministry Check – Volunteer Church Worker over 18 years
- Safe Ministry Check –Volunteer Church Worker 13-17 years
- Safe Ministry Declarations
- Australian Federal Police Background Check Application Form
- NSW Working with Children Check
- Anglican Church of Australia National Register Check
- SRE Teacher’s Engagement Letter
- Referees Form (licensed positions)
- Position Interview sample for Licensed Church Workers
- Position interview sample for Unlicensed Church Workers
- Documentation for Ordination candidates
- Safe Ministries training (online or face to face) or Diocesan approved equivalent.
- Policy for Safe Ministry to Persons of Concern 2017

G. Review

This Protocol was endorsed by Bishop-in-Council on 14 June 2022 and will be reviewed in 2024.

Acknowledgement – Adapted from the Screening Protocol of Canberra and Goulburn Diocese 2019.



Diocesan Screening Guidelines

For all specific implementation questions contact the Safe Ministry Helpline on 1800 070 511.

Table 1. Involved in ministry to children (including oversight of ministry to children)

Role	Working with Children Check	Police Check	Safe Ministry Check	Safe Ministry Declare	Anglican National Register Check	Anglican Prof Standards Clearance	Medical/ Psych Assess	SRE Letter and Card	Bishop's Licence	Interview and Endorse	Referees	Current Safe Ministry Training
Clergy and Ordination Candidate	✓	✓	Form A		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Level 1+2
Lay Minister	✓	✓	Form A		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	Level 1+2
Parish Safe Ministry Coordinator	✓		Form B		✓					✓	✓	Level 1+2
Volunteer (18+ years)*	✓		Form B		✓					✓	✓	Level 1+2
Volunteer (13-17 yrs)*			Form C		✓					✓	✓	Level 1+2
SRE Teacher	✓		Form B		✓			✓		✓	✓	Level 1+2
Parish Council/Warden*	✓		Form B		✓					✓	✓	Level 1+2
Diocesan Board and Committee member	✓		Form B		✓					✓	✓	Level 1+2

*Responsibility for processing documentation (including uploading to SMO) for volunteers, SRE teachers and Parish Council/Wardens is with the Parish Safe Ministry Coordinator but please contact the Bishop's Registry for assistance.

Table 2. Not involved in ministry to children

Role	Working with Children Check	Police Check	Safe Ministry Check	Safe Ministry Declare	Anglican National Register Check	Anglican Prof Standards Clearance	Medical/ Psych Assess	SRE Letter and Card	Bishop's Licence	Interview and Endorse	Referees	Current Safe Ministry Training
Volunteer*				Form D				N/A		✓	✓	Level 1
Aged Care Facility Pastoral Visitor*		✓		Form D				N/A		✓	✓	Level 1
Parish Council/Warden*				Form D	✓			N/A		✓	✓	Level 1
Diocesan Board and Committee member				Form D	✓			N/A		✓	✓	Level 1

*Responsibility for processing documentation for volunteers, aged care facility pastoral visitors and Parish Council/wardens is with the Parish Safe Ministry Coordinator but please contact the Bishop's Registry for assistance.

Relevant forms

There are four (4) different role specific Safe Ministry Checks and Declaration forms, all available from the Diocesan website:

- A. Safe Ministry Check – Ordained, Paid and Licensed Church Worker
- B. Safe Ministry Check – Volunteer (over 18 years) in Ministry with Children/Vulnerable People
- C. Safe Ministry Check - Volunteer (13-17 yrs) in Ministry with Children/Vulnerable People
- D. Safe Ministry Declaration – Volunteer Role (non-child/vulnerable people)

Interview and referee checklists can be found on the Diocesan website.

Appendix: The process for screening

1. Screening documentation is provided to the applicant as applicable to their role by the relevant office holder (i.e. MDO, Parish Safe Ministry Coordinator).
2. The applicant completes the Safe Ministry requirements for their role (see tables above)
3. Position **interviews** are carried out by the relevant office holder i.e.:
 - For Parish based lay (licensed & unlicensed) positions, all interviews will be carried out by the Rector or Parish Safe Ministry Coordinator.
 - For Clergy, the relevant Diocesan office holder in the Bishop's Office will complete interviews.
 - For Diocesan Board and Committee members who have not been previously interviewed in connection with that Board or Committee, the Chair shall arrange for the prospective member to be interviewed by the Chair and, in the case of the Chair and Deputy Chair, by the Bishop or a person nominated by the Bishop.
4. **Referee** forms:
 - For licensed positions referee forms are to be sent, by the applicant, to the nominated referees. The Referee will then send completed Referee forms to the Diocesan Ministry Development Officer (MDO).
 - For parish based unlicensed positions, the Rector or Parish Safe Ministry Coordinator will contact the nominated referees and complete the referee section on the Safe Ministry Check.
 - For members of Boards and Committees, the Chair (or other person making the nomination if it is not from the Board of Committee itself) will provide the Referee form to the nominated referees and then send the completed form to the Diocesan Registrar
5. The Diocese will process **screening documentation** including verification of Working With Children Check (NSW), police clearances, and Anglican National Register Checks.
6. Once all screening for appointment requirements have been successfully completed, the Bishop's office or the relevant Parish office holder (i.e. Rector or Safe Ministry Coordinator) will be notified.
7. In normal circumstances, appointment to a role will not occur until the Safe Ministry Screenings are complete.

Adverse finding

1. In the event of an adverse finding or concern raised in the process of the referee checks or screening documentation the Professional Standards Director shall be informed by the relevant office holder (Bishop's Office, MDO, Rector, Parish Safe Ministry Coordinator). A risk report shall be produced by the Director of Professional Standards or delegate and provided to the relevant office holder/s.
2. The Bishop, or delegate (or relevant office holder) shall then implement appropriate risk and pastoral management, this may include: implementation of Policy for Safe Ministry to Persons of Concern, a decision that the applicant is not to be appointed to a role, a decision that a person may only be appointed to a role under supervision or with specified restrictions.