

# How to help create a Safe Church culture

The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable people should never just be a compliance matter. We must uphold the Best Practice imperative placed on all Christian organisations (Churches, Agencies, Movements and Communities).

Below are guidelines to be implemented in order to enable a safe church culture

- **Safe church commitment statement**

This statement can be used on role descriptions, ministry reports, displayed in newsletters/bulletins, notice boards and websites. It outlines that you as a church are committed to the safety and protection of children, young people and the vulnerable.

- **Safe church signage**

Along with the safe church commitment, it is good practice to visually display that you are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable people. The signage should include who the safe church contact is for your community and be child friendly in its language so it is accessible to everyone.

- **Child Protection / Child Safety Policies**

These policies adhere to national and state/territory based legislation, provides guidance and structures around acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and indicates appropriate measures for responding to disclosures of abuse and any areas of misconduct.

- **Council/Board Meeting quarterly agenda item**

Discuss how safe church practices are being implemented, followed up, reviewed and accepted on a regular basis throughout the year on the agenda of council/board meetings (i.e. Parish Councils / Organisation Boards etc.)

- **Safe recruiting practices**

Good practices in recruiting involve appropriate advertising, role descriptions, screening of applicants, reference checking, interviews, proper induction processes and probation periods for both paid and volunteer staff. These practices work to deter unsuitable applicants and reduce risk to children, young people and vulnerable people.

- **Regular training**

All of the above points become latent if they are not activated with appropriate training and resources on a regular basis to those who are involved in children's and youth ministries and/or have any pastoral responsibility over children, young people and vulnerable people. Training aims at equipping and empowering people to serve the ministry with confidence and know where to go when needing support.

- **Pastoral and Professional Supervision**

Supervision is a practice of the duty of care to those who are in ministry and leadership. Being able to debrief concerns and be held accountable to their roles and responsibilities, it is a professional standard across many forms of work including psychologists, doctors, social workers and youth workers, and therefore should be a standard held by those in church leadership and pastoral ministries.