

Safe Ministry Representatives

Safe Ministry Records - A guide

August 2016

Introduction

The introduction of the Working With Children Check (WWCC) in 2014-15 for all paid and volunteer workers in child-related work has given parish Safe Ministry record systems a new focus, due to the additional information required to be stored as part of our compliance with WWCC requirements.

For this reason, it is very important to ensure that proper record systems are in place in our parishes for the accurate and consistent recording of safe ministry information in a way that is **up-to-date, comprehensive, accessible, sustainable, long lasting and secure.**

This document seeks to set out the basic requirements for proper record systems and the options available to parishes in this area from a 'best practice' perspective.

Implications for parishes

1. *Accuracy.*
2. *Security/Privacy*
3. *Bare minimum v best practice.*
4. *Choosing your record keeping method*

Accuracy

The highest priority is to make sure that you are **keeping (or start to keep!) the highest quality records that you can**, using whatever system you are currently using, or upgrading to a better system (see later).

A common situation in churches is that the actual data entry is often delegated to an admin person in the church office. This is perfectly acceptable, but it is still the responsibility of the Safe Ministry Rep to make sure the data is accurate and up to date.

Here are some tips:

- Plan to regularly check the actual records yourself

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Professional Standards Unit - Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney

Neil Atwood – Safe Ministry Representative Liaison

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- Design a simple process/procedure to ensure accurate and consistent data entry.
EG: All WWCC and Safe Ministry Training information for the records **must** come through you first, then go to data entry, then is checked by you, say once a month, or a couple of times a term.
- When checking the records, if it is a standalone file (ie: a spreadsheet or similar) take the opportunity to back it up. Create an organised approach to backups, making sure at least one back up is kept in a location other than the church.

Security/Privacy

With the presence of sensitive personal information (D.O.B. and potentially, addresses and other contact information), we need to be confident in the level of security around these records. So, for all electronic records, password protecting access to the Safe Ministry record file/system is essential.

Any paper records should be stored in securely locked cabinets – preferably fire resistant.

Access to the Safe Ministry records should be restricted to the Safe Ministry Representative, Rector and perhaps a Warden. The exception to this would be if Safe Ministry records are kept as part of a church management system that ministry staff all have access to.

Bare minimum v best practice

This is a description of exactly what data is required to be kept as a bare minimum to satisfy both Diocesan and State Government requirements.

‘Best Practice’ includes additional information that helps to ‘flesh out’ those records, making future analysis and referencing of the data easier and more useful.

Bare minimum

Name, address, phone and email details – plus:

WWCC

Name	WWCC No.	D.O.B	Expiry Date	Date verified	Result
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Safe Ministry Training

Name	Date of last training	Type of training (Essentials or Refresher	Name of Trainer	Location of training	Expiry date of training
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Best practice

Name, address, phone and email details – plus:

WWCC

Name	WWCC No.	D.O.B	Expiry Date	Date verified	Result	Who verified by

Safe Ministry Training

Name	Date of last training	Type of training (Essentials or Refresher)	Name of Trainer	Location of training	Expiry date of training
Ministry Position	Date of application	Interviewer	Date commenced ministry	Previous training – date	Previous training - type
Previous training – Expiry date	Interstate or overseas workers – police check and references				Note field (for additional unstructured info)

Obviously, the more information that is added, the greater the complexity, and the more care needed to be taken in maintaining the records.

The ‘best practice’ approach is best suited to the more sophisticated church management systems such as Elvanto or Church Community Builder (CCB).

In addition to the above, you will almost certainly need a paper file for miscellaneous documents such as: Volunteer Application Forms, Safe Ministry training certificates, copies of police checks, references, etc.

If using an online database system, you may be able to store many of those documents as part of a person’s record by scanning them to pdf documents.

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Choosing your record keeping medium

This is a strategic, long term decision (unless you are a very small church), and so careful consideration should be given to the choice of recording method to avoid potential loss of data and time consuming re-entry of data.

At present, there is no practical limit to the time we need to keep such records – due largely to the very long time between an offence occurring in a church and the reporting of that offence (currently an average of 22-23 years). So **HOW** we record this information needs to take into account the ability to maintain the integrity of the data over a very long period of time.

Elvanto and Church Community Builder for mid-large sized churches.

Many middle-sized and larger churches are now using powerful cloud-based, subscription Church Management Systems such as *Elvanto* or *Church Community Builder*.

These offer great flexibility and power in the way information can be stored and reports generated. They offer flexible layout options, excellent access control, powerful reporting functions, and access from any internet-enabled device and provide backup redundancy, ensuring that the data is safely backed up.

You can even minimise the paper aspect of your Safe Ministry Records, because these tools allow you scan documents as pdf's and upload them to form part of an individual's records.

So if your church is using one of those CMS's, you are probably in a good position in terms of using a system that can grow with you, is secure and safely backed up.

See the *Appendix* for sample screenshots as examples of how these systems can be used for recording a person's safe ministry data.

Smaller churches

If your church is not large enough or chooses not to use systems like Elvanto, what are your options?

- ***Paper-based records.***

There are two types of paper-based records:

Records of WWCC and Safe Ministry Training

These really need to be phased out. 'Backing up' is difficult and messy, security is hard to control, reporting options to be alerted to expiring WWCC and Safe Ministry Training dates are non-existent.

Auxiliary paper records.

These are the copies of documents like: Safe Ministry Training certificates, volunteer application forms, references, police checks, WWCC clearance screen prints, etc. Even in fully electronic recording systems, it is hard to escape these, so provision needs to be made for them. Just keeping a manila folder in a filing cabinet is not really sufficient, they should be organised in a manner that makes documents easy to find, they need to be kept securely with access limited to the Senior Minister, the Safe Ministry Rep. and perhaps Wardens.

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- **Spreadsheet**

This is the most common tool used by smaller churches. It is perfectly acceptable in terms of having the capacity to store the required data – even *best practice* level data – and can provide a level of alerting to expiring dates, etc.

But they do require careful attention in order to make organised and consistent backups, securing the file(s) with strong passwords. Key limitations are: lack of ability to store electronic version of paper documents and no data checking on entry.

- **Google Docs.** Some churches who use the free Google software internally for rosters and the like, have also adopted it for safe ministry records. However, this is **not recommended**, as there are significant privacy issues related to the Terms and Conditions of Use that Google impose on users. This is also the case with most other companies that offer free cloud-based applications. Because Safe Ministry records include sensitive personal information, it is strongly recommended that an alternative system is adopted.

- **Other non-cloud software (eg: Pastoral Care, Access database, etc)**

This kind of software is less flexible and is unlikely to provide the kind of features needed to store Safe Ministry records.

But the best solution for smaller churches or larger churches wishing to separate out Safe Ministry Records from other church data is:

Safe Ministry Records – A centralised record storage system provided by the Diocese

To help our churches maintain the high standard necessary, we now offer **Safe Ministry Records Online**. This is a database designed for any church to use as a safe, secure easy to use system for maintaining the electronic aspect of parish Safe ministry records. It is hosted, run and maintained by the Professional Standards Unit and is offered at no cost to any church in the Diocese of Sydney.

Here is a partial list of features and good reasons to consider moving your Safe Ministry records to the system:

Features

- Auto reminders by email and SMS sent to individuals and SMR when: WWCC expires in 90 days and then at 30 days. When Safe Ministry Training expires in 90 and then at 30 days.
- Pre-defined reports for common requirements (and you can add as many custom reports as you wish).
- Mobile-friendly – access or update your church records from any internet-connected device.
- Secure – All information flowing to or from the system to you is encrypted. Two backups of the database are taken every day and stored in different locations.
- Easy to configure a report in the way you want and export that data to a spreadsheet for further processing.

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- New features are still being added.

Reasons to consider moving your Safe Ministry Records to the PSU system:

1. Safe Ministry Record keeping is likely to **get more complex** and involved as time goes on, so if your church is still using a spreadsheet, consider changing to SMRO (Safe Ministry Records Online) now, and let us handle the increasing complexity.
2. If your church is a **bigger church** using Elvanto or a similar system, that's great. But a couple of such churches have reported that they are considering moving the Safe Ministry Records OUT of Elvanto (or similar), because the inclusion of 'outside' people in the Safe Ministry Records (eg: SRE teachers from other schools, external helpers from other churches, etc) is confusing things, and in one case, pushing the cost of that system up. If that might be the case for you – move your Safe Ministry Records into the PSU system, free of charge. There is also an argument for simply keeping all your Safe Ministry Record data separate from everyday parish database information, so that only the people with the need can access Safe Ministry Records. This would normally be the Safe Ministry Rep., the Rector, a data-entry person (if you have one), and possibly other pastoral staff.
3. Are you one of the churches that got a recent request from the Diocesan Registrar to **audit your WWCC records** (10% of churches were)? If your Safe Ministry Records are with our system, you will never get a request like that again – because we can audit such churches from within the system.
4. **Security & Privacy.** Few parishes properly secure sensitive information stored electronically in their own office environment. Our Safe Ministry Records system sits on a professionally maintained server, using an SSL certificate for encrypting all traffic to and from that server. Because certain Diocesan officers (The Registrar, Director of the PSU and the Safe Ministry Liaison Officer) are required to be able to access parish WWCC information, they have secure, separate logins to allow in-house auditing (see 3. above). This is required under the State legislation governing the WWCC system. All other users (parish representatives) each have a unique login which only gives access to their own church's data.

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February 2017

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Appendix 1 - Sample screenshots from Elvanto – two different churches

Church 1

Working with Children	
Currently working with children at Church by the Bridge?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Ministry Position	<input type="checkbox"/> Kids Church <input type="checkbox"/> Tues Creche <input type="checkbox"/> Soul <input type="checkbox"/> Playtime <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Pastor <input type="checkbox"/> Warden
Interviewed by	<input type="checkbox"/> Naomi de Vries <input type="checkbox"/> Paul Dale <input type="checkbox"/> Dan Webster
Date commenced working with children at Church by the Bridge	<input type="text"/>
Signed Working with Children Declaration form	<input type="text"/> Sunday, August 28, 2011 3 yrs
Sighted ID	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Staff or Volunteer?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Staff <input type="radio"/> Volunteer
Government Requirements	
Full Legal Name	<input type="text"/> Paul David
Date of Birth	<input type="text"/> Sunday, April 5, 1973 45 yrs
Registration Number	<input type="text"/> WWC004
Registration Expiry Date	<input type="text"/> Tuesday, July 31, 2018 -4 yrs
Date Verified	<input type="text"/> Thursday, August 1, 2013 1 yrs
Working with Children Outcome	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Cleared <input type="radio"/> Barred
Safe Ministry Training	
Safe Ministry registration on file	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Date completed Safe Ministry Training [?]	<input type="text"/> Friday, June 6, 2014 11 mths
Provider of Safe Ministry Training [?]	<input type="text"/> Youthworks
Name of Trainer for Safe Ministry Training	<input type="text"/> Kylie William
Expiry Date of Safe Ministry Training	<input type="text"/> Tuesday, June 6, 2017 -3 yrs
Child	First Aid
Name of Emergency Contact	<input type="text"/>
Allergies?	<input type="text"/>
Special Needs?	<input type="text"/>
Consent to photos being taken?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Completed Kids Church registration form	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Completed Playtime registration form	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Completed SOUL registration form	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Current first aid certificate?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Expiry date of first aid certificate	<input type="text"/>

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Appendix 2 - Sample screenshots from Elvanto – two different churches Church 2

[People](#) / [Searching "dominic steele"](#) / Steele, Dominic

Steele, Dominic

Village Member

Senior Minister, Village Member




« Previous Person Next Person »


Actions



[Contact Dominic](#)
[Change People Category](#)
[Hide from Member Directory](#)
[Member Directory Settings](#)
[Mark as Contact](#)
[Archive Dominic](#)
[Mark as Deceased](#)
[Delete Dominic](#)



People Flows





Groups




 Parish Council
(no position) 

 Youth - Public
(Parents)
(no position) 

 Staff
Leader 

+ Show More

Volunteering



☒ Make person a volunteer [?]

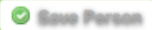
Meeting Leader

Ministry of the Word @ 9:30am »
Ministry of the Word - 9:30am

Address

Ministry of the Word @ 9:30am »
Ministry of the Word - 9:30am

Edit Person Activity Notes Family Members Account




Personal Information

These are the main personal details for this person.

First Name * [?]

Dominic

Date of Birth [?]

Sunday, July 
49 yrs [No year of birth?](#)

Last Name * [?]

Steele

Place of Birth

Email Address [?]

dominic@christiansinthemedia.org

School Grade [?]

None

☒ Receive general emails [?]

☒ Receive emails when
scheduled on a service [?]

Marital Status [?]

Married

Anniversary [?]

[No anniversary year?](#)


Subscriptions

☐ Christians in the Media email
list
☒ Village Church Emails

Access Permissions [?]

☐ Childrens & Youth Team
☐ Financial
☐ Magnification Leaders
☐ Magnification Team
☐ Maturity C Grp Leader
☐ Membership Leader


Mobile Number [?]

(0409) 46 

☒ Receive general messages [?]

☒ Receive messages when
scheduled on a service [?]

Home Number [?]

(02) 956 


Gender [?]

Male

Mailing Address

The mailing address for this person.

Address [?]

11 

Postal Code [?]

2048

☐ Update family mailing address
[?]

[View Map](#)

City [?]

Stanmore

State [?]

NSW

Country [?]

Australia

Locations

Village Church or Christians in the Media

Locations [?]

☒ Village
☒ Christians in the Media

Demographics

Choose the demographics of this person.

Demographics [?]

☒ Adults
☐ Youth
☐ Children
☐ Creché
☐ Village Pre School
☐ Village Kids

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Appendix 2 - Sample screenshots from Elvanto – two different churches

Church 2 (cont)

People / Steele, Dominic • Village Church

7/05/2015 11:53 am

Bible Reading

Ministry of the Word @ 9:30am »

Ministry of the Word - 9:30am

+ Show More

Family Members



Steele, Catherine
Spouse



Steele, Hannah
Child



Steele, Solomon
Child

+ Show More

Significant Dates

Network Members

Church Attended

Village Church

Employer

Anglican Church

Working with Children Check (Aust & NSW Governments)

WWCC Comments

Paid & unpaid roles

Previous WWCC Comments

WWCC Number

WWCC0

Previous WWCC Number

WWCC Commence

Thursday, September 19, 2013

Previous WWCC

Commencement

yrs

WWCC Expiry

Wednesday, September 19, 2018

Previous WWCC Expiry

yrs

Date verified with

<https://wwcccheck.ccyp.nsw.gov.au>

as Village Children's

Volunteer or Worker

Friday, March 21, 2014

1

yrs

Old WWCC documents (prior to June 2013)

Old WWC Attachment 4

Submitted

Sunday, October 11, 2009

5

yrs

Old WWC Attachment 5

Submitted

Sunday, October 11, 2009

Old WWC Attachment 2

Submitted

yrs

Sydney Anglican Safe Ministry Certification

Ministry Position

Previous Certificate Type

Safe Ministry Attainment Certificat

Date of Appointment to
Ministry Position

Previous Commencement
Date

Certificate Type

Safe Ministry Vulnerable People

Monday, August 27, 2012

2 yrs

Commence Date

Friday, June 6, 2014

11 mths

Previous Expiry date

Thursday, August 27, 2015

-1 yrs

Expiry Date

Tuesday, June 6, 2017

-3 yrs

Previous Training Location

Annandale

Previous Trainer

Robyn Powell

Training Location

Annandale

Trainer

PSU - Faithfulness in Service

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