



Taking Bullying and Other Misconduct Seriously

Information for victims and reporters of bullying



safeministry.org.au

The Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney has a **zero-tolerance** policy for bullying and other misconduct.

As Archbishop of Sydney, I have a concern for the welfare of all who are members of our church. When the body of Christ is in good health, loving harmony abounds in our churches. Yet, it is Satan's desire to disrupt the harmony of God's people, and he will often do this through the abuse of people by those in positions of authority and power. Sometimes our leaders spiritually abuse their flock unwittingly, while others take delight in lording it over those under their care. Yet 'this should not be', says the Lord Jesus (Mark 10:43).

This brochure is designed as an information guide for those who are victims of bullying or those who witness it and wish to report it.

I am committed to strengthening our culture of 'safe ministry' through education and professional development of our clergy and lay people, as we seek to maintain the standards of Christian ministry which are grounded in the teaching of the Bible.



The Professional Standards Unit (PSU) administers the complaints procedure in relation to clergy and church workers. It also has the overall responsibility throughout the Diocese to ensure that all parishes and other activities of the Diocese provide safe places for ministry.

We are committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, particularly within our own community. The PSU endeavours to respond promptly to each concern raised about the behaviour of clergy and church workers. They also help to provide supervision of and pastoral accountability for any one in leadership who is known to have bullied or otherwise abused a member of the congregation.

“Yet, it is Satan’s desire to disrupt the harmony of God’s people, and he will often do this through the abuse of people by those in positions of authority and power.”

As long as Satan seeks to disrupt the harmony of God’s people, we must all stand firm and resist him, in the power of God’s Spirit, for the good of God’s people and the glory of God’s name.

**Glenn N Davies
Archbishop of Sydney**

Are you the victim of bullying or other misconduct by a Minister, lay leader, youth worker or any church worker in the Anglican Church? Do you know someone else who is a victim? Are you concerned about them?

The Anglican Diocese of Sydney has a commitment to responding to complaints about misconduct, bullying and harassment. We want to support you and act on your report.

This brochure is for victims and reporters of bullying. You may be feeling ashamed, angry, hurt, uncomfortable or embarrassed. We know that it is not easy to tell someone, but we do want to hear from you.

Against whom can you make a complaint?

You can report bullying or other misconduct by any Anglican church worker.

A *church worker* is defined as a person who is or has been a member of the clergy, or holds or has held any position of leadership within the Diocese. They may be paid or unpaid. Some examples are:

- a member of the ordained clergy
- an office-holder in the Church
- a member of a church governing body board, council, committee, Synod, Standing Committee, regional council or parish council
- a church warden, organist, choir leader, parish council secretary or parish treasurer
- leaders of Sunday Schools, Bible classes, study groups, youth fellowships or other parish organisations
- a chief executive officer of a church organisation

- a person appointed by a rector, an acting rector, church warden, parish council or by their delegate.

If the bullying or other misconduct has occurred in another diocese, state or country, the matter will be referred to the relevant authority.

What is bullying or other misconduct?

The types of behaviour defined as misconduct in the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017* include:

- bullying
- emotional abuse
- harassment
- spiritual abuse
- failing to report abuse
- threatening or obstructing a person who intends to or has made a complaint
- not cooperating with or obstructing the investigation of a complaint.

Please refer to the [*Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017*](#) for complete and detailed definitions of bullying and other misconduct such as sexual abuse.

There is another brochure for victims and reporters of other types of abuse, such as sexual abuse, which can be found at www.safeministry.org.au.

Tell us about bullying or other misconduct

We want people who know of bullying or other misconduct to speak to us because we want:

- to ensure that all people who experience bullying or other misconduct receive care and support
- to provide a safe environment for all those in our care
- to care for all other people who are affected by the bullying or other misconduct
- to ensure that all clergy and church workers are above reproach
- to ensure that the person who engages in bullying or other misconduct faces the consequences and is held accountable for their actions.

How do I speak to someone about bullying or other misconduct?

There are five Contact Persons across the Anglican Diocese of Sydney who you can talk to.

To contact any of our Contact Persons to discuss your concerns in confidence or to make a report, please call the **Abuse Report Line (1800 774 945)** or email abusereport@safeministry.org.au.

If you would like further information about what happens when you report bullying or misconduct, contact the Professional Standards Unit (PSU):

Phone: (02) 9265 1604

Email: info@safeministry.org.au

Website: www.safeministry.org.au

What happens when I contact a Contact Person?

Our Contact Persons are all qualified and experienced in the area of responding to bullying and other misconduct. They will be glad to listen to you with care, dignity and respect, give you full explanations about our procedures for dealing with bullying or other misconduct and answer any questions you might have before you decide what to do. They will provide information about support services which may be able to help you.

You may wish to speak to a Contact Person just to obtain information, and that is okay.

Will my report be treated with confidentiality?

The strictest confidence is given to reports. The details of your report will only be made known to those who need to know. All persons involved in assessing and investigating reports are well aware of the confidential nature of these matters.

For further information see our Privacy Policy at
www.safeministry.org.au/privacy.

How will the church care for and support you?

As a Church, we are committed to responding to those who have been mistreated with compassion and empathy, and by providing practical assistance. See below for some of the ways we do this.

Pastoral care

We shall provide a chaplain to support you while you receive help from the PSU. We recognise that reporting bullying and other misconduct can be traumatic and takes courage. As far as possible, we want to make sure that you are properly supported while you are receiving help from us.

Professional counselling

We shall pay for you to see a professional counsellor with appropriate qualifications and experience. You can choose the counsellor yourself or the chaplain can recommend someone. The counsellor will not be a church worker. We may ask for your counsellor to give us a progress report, but we shall first ask for your permission.

An apology

We shall provide you with an apology for what happened to you. A church representative will offer to meet with you to acknowledge and apologise for what you experienced. He or she will acknowledge that bullying and other misconduct is always wrong and should never occur.

Responding to your report (see pages 11 – 16)

We provide you with a Contact Person to listen and understand the nature and extent of what you have suffered. The Contact Person will provide you with support. You will also have the assistance and support of a chaplain or facilitator who will work with you towards finding the best way forward. This may involve dealing with the alleged respondent according to the procedures in the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017*. The process is explained on pages 11 – 16 of this brochure.

Are there any other ways to access help?

Help for bullying can also be sought through the Australian Government's Fair Work Commission, SafeWork NSW, or the Australian Human Rights Commission. These organisations, depending upon the circumstances, can offer alternatives to contacting the PSU. For more information see:

Fair Work Commission

www.fwc.gov.au

1300 799 675

SafeWork NSW

www.safework.nsw.gov.au

13 10 50

Australian Human Rights Commission

www.humanrights.gov.au

1300 656 419

What happens when a complaint of bullying is made under the *Ministry Standards Ordinance?*

Complaint

The Contact Person will:

- listen to you with dignity and respect;
- explain and answer any questions you may have; and
- assist you to record in writing what happened.

If you do want to report bullying or other misconduct you will be asked to provide the following information:

- the name of the person who has experienced the bullying or other misconduct;
- the name of the person who has engaged in the bullying or other misconduct (the respondent);
- the nature of the bullying or other misconduct;
- the parish or organisation for which the person who has engaged in bullying or other misconduct was working;
- when and where the bullying or other misconduct occurred; and
- any other supporting information, if available.

The Contact Person will send your complaint to the Director of Professional Standards who will acknowledge that it has been received.

At an appropriate time a response will be obtained from the person against whom allegations are made. This person is also known as the respondent. This will usually require the disclosure of the complainant's name to the respondent.

Facilitated Conversations and Conciliation

You may also wish to have the assistance of a chaplain or a facilitator to help to resolve your issues with the respondent instead of going immediately to the formal processes of the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017*. The chaplain or facilitator can meet with you to discuss a way forward. The chaplain or facilitator may also wish to speak with the respondent and then make recommendations on next steps. Next steps may involve facilitated conversations between you and the respondent, if the chaplain or facilitator and you agree it is appropriate given the circumstances.

Mentoring

You may choose to have ongoing support from a chaplain or facilitator who can act as a mentor as you move forward.

Counselling

You may choose to have the support of a counsellor to process what has happened and to help bring healing through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Investigation

If all of the matters raised in your report cannot be resolved by other means and your report proceeds under the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017* as a formal complaint then the allegations may be independently investigated.

This will include obtaining a formal response from the respondent to your formal complaint.

The investigation may include the Investigator asking you to clarify the circumstances surrounding the allegations and provide any further information which may be needed as a result of the investigation. It will require your name and any statements or material you provide to the Investigator to be disclosed to the respondent.

The respondent will be given an opportunity to respond to the investigator's report. While you will not have access to the investigator's report or other documents you will have an opportunity to respond to anything the respondent and the investigator say about you and your statement as part of the investigative procedure.

Consideration

If the respondent is an unpaid lay church worker, an independent Adjudicator may be appointed who will review the complaint and make recommendation(s) in relation to the respondent.

If the respondent is a member of the clergy or a paid lay church worker, the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) will review the complaint and make recommendation(s) in relation to the respondent.

The Adjudicator or PSC will take into account the matters raised by both you, the person making the complaint (the complainant) and the respondent as well as all the circumstances of the case as revealed by the investigation. A detailed list of what they must consider is contained in the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017*.

Depending upon the complexity, there can be a significant period of time between the receipt of your report by the Contact Person and consideration of your formal complaint by the PSC or adjudicator.

For your protection and peace of mind you are not a party to the proceedings under the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017*. This makes the process very different from adversarial court proceedings. Instead, you are more like a witness who reports misconduct. A chaplain and your Contact Person are available to help and provide support for you during this time.

Outcomes

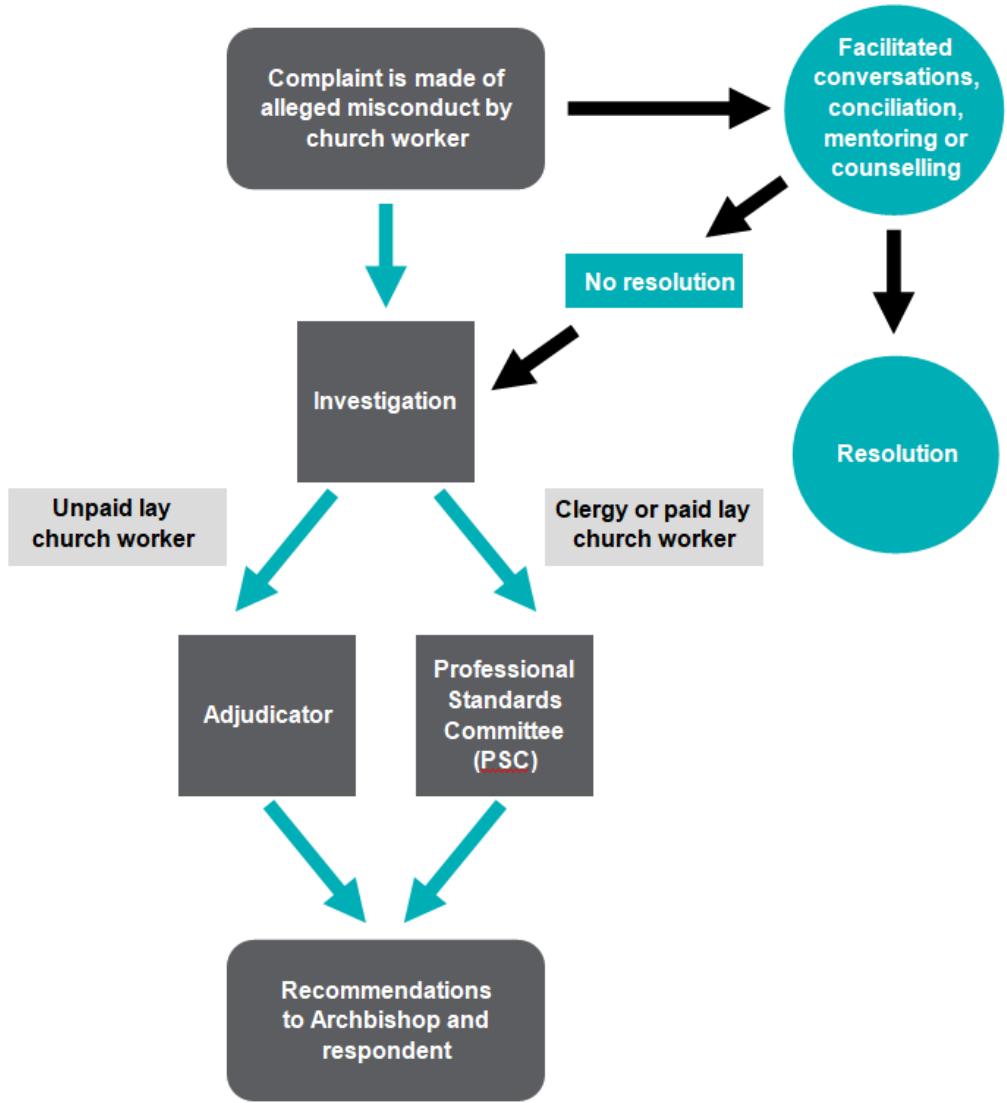
The aims of the process are that:

- complainants have the opportunity to bring forward allegations of bullying or misconduct and they are heard;
- complainants have assistance in dealing with the issues that arise for them, including their need for affirmation and support;
- complainants have a chance, where appropriate, to consider whether forgiveness of the respondent is possible, while never overlooking or forgetting the consequences of the bullying or other misconduct;
- respondents have every opportunity to bring forward their response to allegations of bullying or other misconduct;
- respondents are brought to account, challenged to apologise, and encouraged to seek to make amends and to face up to the consequences of their behaviour; and
- vulnerable people are protected.

Possible outcomes of the complaints process include the Adjudicator or PSC recommending to the Archbishop that the respondent:

- make an apology
- make reparation
- undertake training
- undertake counselling
- participate in facilitated conversations with complainant
- participate in a 360 Review Survey
- work with a qualified professional to grow in insight and empathy
- undertake group therapy
- undertake professional supervision
- engage an approved mentor for spiritual growth and discernment
- be suspended
- have their authority revoked
- have their employment terminated
- resign from office or employment
- not accept future nominations or appointments to roles or offices
- request relinquishment of holy orders (where the respondent is a member of the clergy)
- consent to a prohibition order
- enter into a safety plan
- have no further action taken against them with respect to the complaint.

Summary of the complaints process



Please note: this diagram merely summarises steps and actions that may be taken under and outside of the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017* and is not comprehensive.

Complaints regarding clergy or paid lay church workers that are not resolved at the Professional Standards Committee stage may be referred to the Professional Standards Board for final determination.

Important sources of further information

Professional Standards Unit (PSU)

www.safeministry.org.au

(02) 9265 1604

info@safeministry.org.au

Abuse Report Line: 1800 774 945 or abusereport@safeministry.org.au

Lifeline

www.lifeline.org.au

24-hour Helpline: 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service

www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

24-hour Helpline: 1300 659 467

MensLine – counselling for men

www.mensline.org.au

1300 78 99 78

Anglicare Counselling

www.anglicare.org.au/what-we-offer/counselling

1300 651 728

Clergy Assistance Program – support for clergy and spouses

www.anglicare.org.au/what-we-offer/counselling/clergy-assistance-program

1300 094 587

Relationships Australia NSW & ACT – individual and family counselling

www.nsw.relationships.com.au

1800 025 441

