




Purpose of this Resource

This resource is intended to support churches to implement the Child Safe Standards. It includes examples of **key strategies** that can be used to implement each Standard; many are already being implemented in churches.

The list is not exhaustive. Its purpose is to assist with having conversations to inform action plans to strengthen safe ministry practices and create a culture that keeps children safe and protects them from harm.

How to use the Resource

-  *Highlight those strategies your church has already implemented;*
-  *Identify additional strategies you can include in your church practices;*
-  *Use the Additional examples section below each Standard to record any strategies not listed that your church has implemented.*

Further Resources



The Safe Ministry Blueprint

The [Safe Ministry Blueprint documents](#) available on the Safe Ministry website are aimed at informing people across all levels of leadership and church engagement to help ensure greater awareness, transparency, and accountability within our churches and to help foster a culture of safe ministry at all levels of the church.



Office of the
Children's Guardian

Child Safe Self-Assessment

The NSW Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) has developed a number of helpful resources, including the Child Safe Self-Assessment, a free online resource which generates a personalised Assessment and Action Report. Resources are available on their website located [here](#).

Background to the Child Safe Standards and the Child Safe Scheme

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse recommended 10 Child Safe Standards based on its findings, extensive research, and consultation about what makes organisations child safe.

The Standards provide a principle-based framework to help organisations working with children develop strategies and to create a culture that keeps children safe and protects them from harm.

On 1 February 2022, the NSW Child Safe Scheme commenced. Religious organisations providing services to children are required under the Children’s Guardian Act 2019 to demonstrate how they are implementing the Child Safe Standards.

On 1 February 2023, Part 9A of the Children’s Guardian Act 2019 came into force, which allows the Children’s Guardian to take action to ensure organisations (including religious organisations) comply with the Child Safe Standards. Whilst their approach focuses on capability building and support, this can include monitoring visits, conducting investigations, and issuing of compliance notices and penalties.

The Standards



1 *Standard 1: Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture*

- 1.1 Safe Ministry Representative is appointed
- 1.2 Safe Ministry report is prepared and delivered annually at Parish Council
- 1.3 Child safe statement of commitment visible on church website demonstrating a public commitment to child safety
- 1.4 Child safety is included in staff meeting/ministry team agendas
- 1.5 Code of conduct is in place for all leaders in children's and youth ministries and other staff
- 1.6 Information is shared with leaders/staff/parents about how the church is implementing the Child Safe Standards and other key decisions impacting child safety
- 1.7 Job descriptions (including Children's and Youth leaders) include a statement about safe ministry being central to the role
- 1.8 Church newsletter is used to promote the importance of child safety, in particular being a whole church responsibility
- 1.9 The priority of being child safe is stated at the church's AGM, included in documents and/or statements
- 1.10 Information is provided at the beginning of the year/term to all parents which details the church's commitment to child safe practices and the process for reporting any concerns
- 1.11 Leaders demonstrating a commitment to safe ministry or actively supporting a child safe culture are noticed and acknowledged

Additional Examples



2 *Standard 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously*

- 2.1 Children and youth are encouraged to provide feedback informally to leaders about programs
- 2.2 Information is displayed informing children and youth about how to speak up and make a complaint
- 2.3 Leaders take time to get to know children and youth and identify how they most like to share their opinions and views
- 2.4 Leaders model a culture that demonstrates children and youth are listened to and their views are important
- 2.5 Formal opportunities are provided for children and youth to provide feedback about the programs on offer at church, what they like and don't like; action taken in response to the feedback is communicated
- 2.6 Feedback tools used to gather children and youth's feedback about programs at church are accessible for all

- 2.7 Children and youth provide input into planned activities; feedback is provided on outcomes to their suggestions
- 2.8 Children and youth are involved in the development of a statement of commitment to child safety
- 2.9 Children and youth are asked for ideas on how to improve the safety of church for all children and youth; and involved in developing a plan for treating one another respectfully
- 2.10 Activities are included that encourage children and youth to develop positive peer relationships
- 2.11 Leaders promote discussion that supports children and youth to recognise safe and unsafe situations
- 2.12 Leaders are trained in how to empower children and youth and enhance participation
- 2.13 Children and youth are encouraged to talk about themselves, their culture and identity

**Additional
Examples**



3

Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved

- 3.1 Parents and carers are made aware of steps to take if there is a concern regarding child safety, including contact details of Safe Ministry Representative
- 3.2 During registration of children and youth for church programs parents/carers can view a statement of the church's commitment to child safe practices including a link to the church's safe ministry information on their website
- 3.3 Information is provided to parents/carers regarding the steps the church takes to ensure the safety of children and youth
- 3.4 Children and youth safety is discussed at parent/carer forums including details of the church's child safe practices
- 3.5 Parents and carers are involved in a range of ways that enhance their connection to the church
- 3.6 Child safe messages are conveyed to parents/carers through a range of means
- 3.7 Parents are invited to have input into the child safe practices of the church; input is acted on
- 3.8 Church complaint handling policy includes numerous ways for parents and carers to make a complaint about child abuse; and ensures barriers to making a complaint are addressed

**Additional
Examples**



4 ***Standard 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account***

- 4.1 The church commits to the safety of all children and youth regardless of their culture, identity, disability, social or economic background
- 4.2 The church’s child safe approach meets the needs of children and youth from diverse backgrounds
- 4.3 The church recognises some children and youth find it difficult to speak up and be heard and will make adjustments to ensure all have the opportunity to speak up and are listened to
- 4.4 The church recognises some children and youth are more vulnerable to sexual abuse due to a range of risk factors and seeks to protect them from harm
- 4.5 Expertise is sought from community groups to inform child safe approaches
- 4.6 Child safe policy is accessible by utilising different approaches e.g. available in different languages; simple English

***Additional
Examples***



5 ***Standard 5: People working with children are suitable and supported***

- 5.1 Leaders are required to complete Safe Ministry Training Essentials and update training every 3 years
- 5.2 Leaders participate in a screening process prior to being appointed to positions including interviews, reference check by minister/delegate, WWCC (including verification) and Safe Ministry check
- 5.3 Leaders are supported by a formal structure of accountability, and it is clear who leaders can raise concerns with
- 5.4 Recruitment of leaders includes providing information about the church’s child safe practices during an induction process
- 5.5 Information about Child Safe Standards is provided to all leaders
- 5.6 On-going training and support are provided to leaders
- 5.7 Positive child safe leader behaviours are noticed and congratulated
- 5.8 Leader behaviours that are contrary to the code of conduct are called-out and addressed

***Additional
Examples***



6 *Standard 6: Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused*

- 6.1 Staff/leaders appropriately respond to and report child abuse, including knowing when to report to Police, Safe Ministry Office, OCG and DCJ
- 6.2 Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly
- 6.3 The church has a child-focused complaint handling process that is understood by children, youth, staff, leaders and families
- 6.4 Complaints policy identifies numerous ways children, youth and parents can make complaints including for those with a disability
- 6.5 The church has a complaint handling policy that clearly outlines roles and responsibilities
- 6.6 Barriers to children and youth making disclosures of abuse or harm are addressed
- 6.7 The church has a complaints register which includes a record of actions taken in response
- 6.8 Concerns are recorded and leaders understand record keeping responsibilities
- 6.9 Staff and leaders complete Safe Ministry training which includes training in responding to children and youth reporting/disclosing abuse
- 6.10 The church has a formalised approach for children and youth and families to provide feedback and raise any concerns

**Additional
Examples**



7 *Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training*

- 7.1 All leaders and staff are required to complete Safe Ministry training
- 7.2 Leaders have read and understood the code of conduct and records are kept to confirm
- 7.3 Leaders are provided with information/instruction to help keep children and youth safe, especially in higher risk areas such as camps and social contact with children and youth
- 7.4 Leaders attend training days/camps throughout the year
- 7.5 The church has a culture of ongoing training and recognises it's benefits and importance
- 7.6 There is a structure in the ministry team which enables support and accountability
- 7.7 Leaders are asked what would make them more confident in reporting concerning or unacceptable behaviour and the church acts on the feedback

**Additional
Examples**



8 *Standard 8: Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur*

- 8.1 Social contact policies have been developed and are followed
- 8.2 Leaders to children and youth ratio is appropriate
- 8.3 Physical environment enables good line of sight into various spaces where children and youth are participating in programs
- 8.4 Church premises have no secluded areas accessible to children and youth
- 8.5 A risk management strategy is developed for all activities undertaken
- 8.6 Risk management plans are developed for specific risks and are known by all leaders who understand their responsibilities e.g. where participants are from a range of age groups
- 8.7 Children and youth have input into reviewing the risk management plan
- 8.8 Registration process is in place for all participants in the various programs
- 8.9 Higher risk environments such as transport by car and sleeping arrangements at camps have policies guiding safe ministry practices
- 8.10 Children and youth are given guidance about unsafe online environments and encouraged to speak up if they feel unsafe
- 8.11 Safe ministry policy clearly outlines expectations when adults are alone with children and youth

Additional Examples



9 *Standard 9: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved*

- 9.1 The church utilises the resources, including Safe Ministry Blueprint documents, available on the Safe Ministry website
- 9.2 Parish Council develops a policy review cycle to include regular reviews of child safe policies and procedures
- 9.3 The church utilises the Child Safe Self-Assessment available from the OCG and seeks to implement improvements in Child Safe practices as identified in the generated Assessment results report
- 9.4 Leaders are supported to attend on-going training,
- 9.5 Leaders are encouraged to seek and act on feedback about child safety and participate in meetings to discuss and agree on changes to improve child safety

- 9.6 Following incidents debriefing occurs and is utilised as a learning opportunity for leaders, to inform best practice and to review the church’s child safe approach
- 9.7 Following a complaint being made the church completes a review to determine improvements to be made to policy or practice

**Additional
Examples**



10

Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

- 10.1 The church follows policies and procedures set by the Diocese of Sydney in relation to child safe practices
- 10.2 The church identifies specific safety risks and has a plan to address
- 10.3 The church seeks to implement the Child Safe Standards
- 10.4 Child safe policies are available in a range of locations e.g. website, at orientation, church foyer; and to a range of people e.g. children/youth, parents, leaders.
- 10.5 Risk management plans are developed for all high risk activities e.g. camps
- 10.6 A child friendly code of conduct is developed and displayed so that children and youth can recognise unsafe behaviour
- 10.7 The church recognises the expertise of external bodies in providing guidance in development of policies and procedures
- 10.8 Regular reviews of policies and procedures is conducted

**Additional
Examples**

