

2 May 2025

WWCC COMPLIANCE and SRE

The purpose of this circular is to inform/remind church leaders of their obligations under the WWCC Scheme to ensure churches are compliant, with particular reference to the provision of Special Religious Education (SRE).

Synod resolution 50/24 (*SRE and the Office of the Children's Guardian*) drew awareness of the Synod to existing obligations under the WWCC Scheme that many church leaders may not be aware of and requested the Office of the Director of Safe Ministry (ODSM) and Youthworks to communicate clear guidelines concerning these obligations. In addition to the SRE specific guidelines we also take this opportunity to remind churches of other more general and ongoing requirements under the scheme.

Most church leaders should already be aware that any person engaged in child related work in a parish context, including as an SRE teacher or helper, is required to hold a WWCC that has been verified by the church with the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG). This is a requirement under State legislation. What may be less well known are the following ongoing obligations:

- a) ensuring the OCG has up to date contact information for the Rector and/or other relevant church personnel responsible for receiving notification of any changes to WWCC status from the OCG.
- b) immediately standing down a worker from child related work if there is a change in the status of their WWCC (i.e. if the individual does not have a WWCC application number or check clearance, the status is barred, interim barred or cannot be found or has expired).
- c) in the case of SRE teachers, to immediately inform the NSW Department of Education of any change to the status of a WWCC held by an SRE teacher/helper.
- d) each individual worker who holds a WWCC is to keep the OCG informed of any change of their address/contact information.

In order to meet the above obligations churches are requested to:

1. Proactively and regularly (at least annually and whenever a new rector is appointed) review and update contact information with the OCG to ensure that any emails sent by the OCG regarding a change to the WWCC status of a worker are received and acted upon by relevant church personnel immediately. The Rector should be the primary contact, but other appropriate contacts could also include the church Safe Ministry Representative, a church administrator, SRE coordinator or a children's or youth minister.
2. At least annually remind individual church workers of their obligation to update the OCG when their personal contact details have changed.

3. In the case of an SRE teacher/helper, if notification is received that the WWCC status of the worker has changed, and they no longer have a WWCC clearance, the Rector must immediately stand the SRE teacher/helper down from their role and as soon as practicable, notify the SRE Office at Youthworks by sending an email to sreoffice@youthworks.net advising of the change in status. Youthworks will notify the NSW Department of Education of the change and remove authorisation for that worker as an SRE teacher. If you consider there is an emergency or urgent action is required, you can also follow up your email with a phone call to the Youthworks office at (02) 8268 3355.
4. Proactively monitor WWCC and Safe Ministry Training expiry dates of relevant church workers to ensure that all church workers are properly compliant with the State legislative requirements and requirements under the Ordinance.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR VISITING SRE TEACHERS

It is not uncommon for one church to have responsibility for coordinating the provision of SRE to several schools or a regional area and to engage teachers/helpers from several local churches, both Anglican and non-Anglican. Please note that the church responsible for coordinating scripture must verify the WWCC of all the teachers and helpers who are working in those schools/region, even if the teacher or helper attends a different local church and holds WWCC verified by that other church. Doing this will ensure that the coordinating church receives notification from the OCG if there is a change in WWCC status to one of those teachers/helpers and enable the church to meet the obligations set out above.



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