

Safe Ministry Blueprint for Safe Ministry Representative

**Safe Ministry with Children and
Other Vulnerable People**

Safe Ministry Blueprints

Used by Permission Professional Standards Unit Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney



Introduction

Ministry to children and young people is vibrant and exciting work, and also greatly significant to the life of the church. Teaching children and youth about Jesus is kingdom work. It is a service to the children and youth, the church family, and to God himself that offers great opportunities, but also carries significant responsibilities for the wellbeing of the children and young people in our care. If we as a church take the teaching and leadership of children and young people seriously then we must do all we can to provide an environment that is safe from any form of harm.

Voyage wants its ministries to be characterised by grace and forgiveness, not rules and regulations; but the Bible is concerned that leaders have a particularly high standard in their personal life. Unfortunately, not all Christian workers have protected children and young people in the past of the wider church. This policy has been developed so that as far as possible, such crimes will not be committed in the context of Voyage church ministries.

Except where a particular age bracket is indicated, or a distinction is drawn between children and youth, references to children in this document are references to anyone under the age of 18.

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1. The role of the Safe Ministry Representative

The ultimate responsibility for safe ministry lies with the senior minister (the "Minister"). However he can delegate the day-to-day work of ensuring safe ministry compliance by appointing (with the agreement of the Parish Council) a safe ministry representative. The representative helps the parish to comply with the safe ministry requirements of the Diocese.



2. Who can be a Safe Ministry Representative?

A Safe Ministry Representative must:

- be 21 years or older,
- have completed Safe Ministry training within the last three years or within three months after their appointment (and every three years after that),
- hold a Working With Children Check clearance which has been verified with the Office of the Children's Guardian,
- have an email account (for administrative purposes),
- have good administrative skills, and
- be capable of maintaining a computer spreadsheet.

He or she must not be bankrupt or mentally ill, or otherwise incapable of acting in the capacity of Safe Ministry Representative.

An added help is if the Safe Ministry Representative has professional training or expertise in child protection issues (such as a teacher, children's worker, youth worker or a person with behavioural or social sciences qualifications and experience). And, it helps if the Representative is not a member of the staff or related to a member of the staff. Otherwise, a church member might feel uncomfortable speaking to the Safe Ministry Representative about concerns regarding a staff member. These are desirable, rather than required, things.



3. Responsibilities of the Safe Ministry Representative

- **ASSIST THE LEAD PASTORS** to comply with the child protection screening requirements,
- **KEEP RECORDS** of Working With Children Checks and Safe Ministry training,
- **MONITOR AND REPORT** on safe ministry systems and practices for Voyage, and
- **REPORT ANY ABUSE.**

a. ASSIST THE LEAD PASTOR/S

The Lead Pastor/s are responsible for making sure that Voyage obeys the law in terms of NSW Working With Children Check (WWCC) requirements. Your role is to assist them in carrying this out.



You must make sure that any and every person engaged in child-related work in Voyage either:

- holds a Working With Children Check clearance that has been verified with the Office of the Children's Guardian and is not subject to a bar;
- has a current Working With Children Check application before the Office of the Children's Guardian; or
- is subject to an exemption.

Every person engaged in child-related work in Voyage must have a WWCC clearance (subject to some exemptions). This applies to both paid workers and volunteers.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years and therefore "child-related work" includes youth ministry activities.

"**Child-related work**" generally means work involving activities primarily related to children (including - in the case of religious bodies - youth groups, youth camps, teaching children and child care) that involve physical or face-to-face contact with children. However the general meaning is subject to a number of exemptions (including workers who are under 18 years of age) and extensions (including the Lead Pastor/s, assistant pastor/s and leaders as they are deemed to be undertaking child-related work where there are children).

If the contact with children is not direct or face-to-face, or the role does not primarily relate to children it will not be child-related work (such as serving morning tea to children after Sunday School).

A Working With Children Check is a prerequisite for anyone in paid or voluntary **child-related work** in NSW.



Before the applicant can begin child-related work, you must check that he or she has a WWCC clearance. To do this, you need to log into the church account with the Office of the Children’s Guardian: <http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/>. You will need to enter the following:

- full name of applicant,
- applicant’s date of birth,
- applicant’s WWCC clearance number or application number.

If the person is barred, you must immediately advise the Lead Pastor/s who must stop their involvement in all child-related work.

AND if the Lead Pastor/s become aware that an adult child worker (paid or unpaid) poses a risk of child abuse; by law they must remove that person from the position. Negligently failing to do so is a criminal act with a maximum penalty of 2 years in jail.

If the person is from interstate or overseas, you should also consider obtaining a criminal record check from that state or country in addition to the WWCC.
See the Working With Children Check appendix at the end of this booklet for further information.

b. KEEP RECORDS

As the Safe Ministry Representative you must keep records of all Working With Children Check clearances and safe ministry training that has been completed by people engaged in child-related work in Voyage.



For every person in child-related work, you must keep the following records in a secure location (with a backup copy):

Personal details	Full name	John William Smith
	Date of birth	20/09/1989
	Ministry position	Youth group leader
Working with Children Check	WWCC number	WWC000XXXE
	Start date in ministry position	04/02/2013
	Verification date	14/10/2014
	Verification outcome	Cleared
	Expiry date*	01/09/2019
	Paid or volunteer work	Volunteer
Safe Ministry Training	Date Safe Ministry Training or Refresher completed (keep all dates)	10/03/2013
	Date Refresher required*	10/03/2016
	Location of training	Online



It is essential that you establish a reliable procedure to remind yourself of impending expiry dates of WWCC clearances and the dates that Refresher training is required, so that you can follow up on those matters with the leaders.

Each and every person involved in a children's ministry position must have undertaken Safe Ministry training within the last 3 years, or within 3 months after their appointment. The Safe Ministry Refresher must be completed every three years thereafter. Junior leaders under the age of 16 should complete Safe Ministry Junior training (www.safeministry.org.au)

A "children's ministry position" means any paid or unpaid position to which a person is appointed by or on behalf of the Lead Pastor/s that involves activities primarily related to, and physical or face-to-face contact with, children. Because a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18, a children's ministry position includes youth ministry roles. Examples of children's ministry positions include crèche leaders, Sunday School leaders, crèche helpers and youth group leaders, etc.

Exemptions for Safe Ministry Training

There is no need to insist on completion of Safe Ministry training for every person who helps out in a children's ministry position from time to time. Examples of people who would not ordinarily be expected to undergo training include:

- A teenager who helps the adult leaders of a primary school-age children's program for a week in the school holidays as a one-off;
- Casual helpers who assist from time to time and do not fulfil a leadership or teaching role in a children's program;
- Other volunteers who help out with programs for infants and young children (such as playgroups) but who have no program responsibility or teaching role.

The screening and training requirements vary for particular ministry roles and circumstances, and depend on the different levels of risk. The following table sets out the WWCC and safe ministry training and other requirements for different ministry positions



People Matrix

ROLES	APPLICATION & ROLE DESCRIPTION	RECRUITMENT CHECK	WWCC	SAFE MINISTRY TRAINING	BLUE PRINT (CODE OF CONDUCT & POLICY)	PLEDGE	WHS INDUCTION
Lead Pastors		✓		✓	✓ Lead Pastors & Overall	✓	✓
Safe Ministry Representative		✓	✓	✓	✓ Safe Ministry Rptg & Overall	✓	✓
Regular Preacher &/or Pastoral Care Leader		✓	✓	✓	✓ Parents & Church Members	✓	✓
V Group Leader		✓	✓	✓	✓ Parents & Church Members	✓	✓
Youth & Children's Ministry church worker		✓	✓	✓	✓ Youth Ministry Leaders	✓	✓
Youth & Children's Ministry church worker under 18		✓	✓	✓	✓ Youth Ministry Leaders	✓	✓
Youth/Children Ministry	Visiting speaker or performer for a one-off occasion in the church.	X	X	X	X	X	✓
Youth/Children's Ministry	Volunteer	X	X	X	✓ Parents & Church Members	✓	✓
	serving food, building caretakers, cleaners, office & admin.	X	X	X	✓ Parents & Church Members	✓	✓
Children Play Area	pack in & pack out of equipment only, no supervision	X	X	X	✓ Parents & Church Members	✓	✓
Sunday Team Leader		✓	✓	✓	✓ Parents & Church Members	✓	✓
Musicians & Singers	with no regular team members under the age of 18	X	X	X	✓ Parents & Church Members	✓	✓
Musicians & Singers	with regular team members under 18yrs	✓	✓	✓	✓ Parents & Church Members	✓	✓
Sound & Slides	with regular team members under 18yrs	✓	✓	✓	✓ Parents & Church Members	✓	✓
General Volunteer	Pack In, Welcome Host, Kitchen, Admin	X	X	X	✓ Parents & Church Members	✓	✓
Social & Multimedia & Web		X	X	X	✓ Parents & Church Members	✓	✓
Trust (Finance)		X	X	X	✓ Parents & Church Members	✓	✓

NOTE: Information used with permission from the Professional Standards Unit Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney. Modifications have been made to suit Voyage structures.

The Safe Ministry Representative must keep records for each leader with details of WWCC clearances and the completion of safe ministry training and other relevant documents of the Safety Ministry Plan for each church worker (paid or volunteer). And he or she needs to ensure that people are followed up when the time for their renewal is approaching. Unless the requirements are met and continue to be met, a person should not be permitted to continue in children's or youth ministry.

The records must be kept in a secure location (with a backup copy). A template for record-keeping can be found at www.safeministry.org.au.



c. MONITOR AND REPORT

The Safe Ministry Representative must monitor and report on safe ministry systems and practices in Voyage.



(i) MONITOR

One of the ways that we can protect children in our churches is to make sure that they are meeting in a physical environment that is appropriate and safe for them.

Along with the Lead Pastor/s, the Safe Ministry Representative must monitor all basic health and safety issues in order to avoid obvious hazards on rented or owned church property, particularly in rooms used by infants, pre-schoolers and primary age children.

Consider particularly the suitability of the space, the safety of the space, and the safety measures in place by asking the following questions. Ideally it is preferable if you are objectively able to tick all the following boxes 'yes'.

Use the provided checklist for suitability of the space as a template on page 8.

(i) PROVIDE AN ANNUAL REPORT

You are to provide an annual report to the Lead Pastors that addresses current safe ministry policies and practices, and any suggested changes to improve the current practices. The aim of this is to ensure the safety of all children involved in the activities of Voyage. A template report can be found at www.safeministry.org.au.



Suitability of the space

Are toilet facilities available?

Is the space appropriate for activities such as games and craft activities?

Is the equipment being used suitable and appropriate for the ages using it? (this is a particularly pertinent question to ask if there is any climbing equipment)

Is the floor non-slip and splinter-free?

In regard to areas used by toddlers and preschoolers:

Is the area fenced off or contained in a room?

Is there a designated area for strollers that are not in use?

Safety of the space

Is the area to be used a safe distance from roads or traffic?

Is the area far removed from places where people may engage in unsafe behaviour (such as smoking or drinking alcohol)?

Is any glass installed at floor level safety glass?

Are all child-height cupboards fitted with child-proof locks?

Is the heating safe to use near children (i.e. is the source of heat removed away from small inquisitive fingers)?

Are all electrical wiring, sockets and appliances regularly maintained and in a safe condition? Are all sockets child-proofed?

In regard to areas that may be used for games and outside play, has the area been checked for items that may pose a potential hazard and such items safely removed (such as broken glass, or discarded needles)?

Is all furniture in a safe condition and without risk of toppling onto a child (such as any stacks of chairs being at a low height)?

First aid and safety measures

Is there a fire extinguisher or fire blanket available on-site?

Is there a well-stocked first aid kit at the activity site?

Is there a specific person in the church who is responsible for checking the first aid kit regularly and replenishing it?

Is there a specific person on-site who is trained in first aid?

Are all leaders aware of the fire safety and evacuation procedures?



d. REPORT ABUSE

It is your responsibility to ensure that any abuse that you become aware of is reported to the relevant authorities. You may become aware of abuse because you have observed indicators of abuse, another person has informed you of their concerns for someone or someone has told you they are being abused. Indicators of children at risk of abuse are listed in the *Safe Ministry Blueprint for Voyage Overall*.



Recent changes to the Act (2019): Any adult who suspects, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is at risk of neglect or physical, sexual or emotional abuse must report it to the relevant authorities.

It is an offence for an adult who knows; believes; or reasonably ought to know that a child abuse offence has been committed but conceals such abuse by failing to report it. The penalty for this offence is 2-5 years in jail depending on the seriousness of the abuse concealed.

Refer to the Safe Ministry Blueprint for Voyage Overall for exemptions

Any child abuse that an adult becomes aware of must be reported to the relevant authorities. A person may become aware of abuse because they have observed indicators of abuse, another person has informed them of their concerns for a child or a child has told them they are being abused.

Under NSW law, **all adults** have a legal obligation to report, as soon as practicable, to the relevant authorities the name of a child if there are reasonable grounds to suspect the child is at risk of significant harm.

Church workers or congregational members may prefer to report such matters to the Lead Pastor/s or Safe Ministry Representative to report on their behalf without fear that they will be prosecuted for failure to report the matter directly. In this case, giving the Lead Pastor or Safe Ministry Representative not just verbal details but details in writing where possible so that an accurate report can be made. It may be advisable, however, for such persons to follow up with those to whom they reported, to ensure that the matter has in fact been reported to the appropriate authority. If there is doubt or concern about how or whether it was reported, they should report it themselves. The Act gives exemptions for not reporting found in the *Blueprint for Voyage Overall*.

If a child discloses abuse or if abuse is observed or suspected by another person, or if a person has been informed by another person of concerns regarding a child or other vulnerable people you should -

- listen to their story,
- comfort the child if they are distressed,
- let the child know they're glad they told them and that they did the right thing, and
- let the child know they are going to get help about what to do next and will get back to them.



As soon as possible after the disclosure, the person to whom the disclosure was made must take the following actions -

Bear in mind that what may seem incredible could be true. Offenders may be cunning, secret and not immediately or obviously identifiable.

(i) WRITE DOWN the details of what was said or what was observed including such details as:

- **who made the disclosure,**
- **date, time and place,**
- **what was said by the person to whom the disclosure was made,**
- **what the child said, and**
- **any grounds for forming the belief that abuse has occurred.**

The person to whom the disclosure was made should keep to the facts about what was said and refrain from expressing their opinion. This document must be signed and dated and could be subpoenaed in court proceedings. There is a sample reporting form available at www.safeministry.org.au.

(ii) REPORT the information to the appropriate authorities

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND DISCLOSURES

Issue or Concern	Report to:
General Suspicions	Lead Pastor* or Safe Ministry Representative**
Child or young person currently at risk of significant harm	<p>Department of Communities and Justice If possible discuss with your Head Ministry Leader or Safe Ministry Representative first and use the Mandatory Reporters Guide https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg</p> <p>Police Contact the police first if the situation requires emergency assistance.</p> <p>Lead Pastor* or Safe Ministry Representative** Where the alleged perpetrator is a church worker, congregational member or church attender.</p>
Knowledge of relevant criminal offences regarding a church worker, congregational member or church attender.	<p>Police</p> <p>Safe Ministry Representative** or Lead Pastor/s*</p>



Child abuse by a church worker, congregational member or church attender.	Lead Pastor* or Safe Ministry Representative** Police
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Anyone who suspects that a church worker, congregational member, or church attender is engaging in sexual misconduct, abusive behaviour towards another adult or conduct that constitutes a serious breach of the Voyage Safe Ministry Blueprints and Training should report it to the appropriate authorities. Similarly, any criminal conduct or threat of harm should also be reported.

REPORTING SUSPECTED ADULT ABUSE AND DISCLOSURES

Issue or Concern	Report to:
Sexual abuse of an adult by a church worker, congregational member or church attender.	Lead Pastor* or Safe Ministry Representative** Police
Other abusive behaviour e.g. physical violence, bullying	Lead Pastor* or Safe Ministry Representative** Where the alleged perpetrator is a church worker
Criminal Conduct	Police Safe Ministry Representative**
Threat of harm to self or others	Police, Ambulance, Mental health service (as required) Lead Pastor* or Safe Ministry Representative**
Other conduct by a church worker** (refer to the Blueprint which includes the code of conduct)	Ministry Team/Department Leader Lead Pastor* or Safe Ministry Representative**

- **Do not report to the Lead Pastor if the allegation is regarding the Lead Pastor*
- ***Do not report to the Safe Ministry Representative (SMR) if the allegation is regarding the SMR*
- ****A church worker includes a minister (pastor), any leader or ministry volunteer (eg, V Group Leader, Sunday School teacher, youth group leader, musician, etc.), visiting minister.*



Contact the Professional Standards Unit of the Anglican Church Diocese for advice if you are unsure of what to do in any circumstance or where an allegation is regarding a Lead Pastor.

Do not undertake an investigation, and do not disclose the allegations to the alleged offender at this initial stage.

4. Follow up and Pastoral Care

Confidentiality

Any suspicion, knowledge or disclosure of abuse must be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Apart from reporting it to the relevant authorities, the information must not ordinarily be shared with anyone else.

Investigations by Police or Department of Communities and Justice

In some cases, a report will lead to an investigation by the Police or Department of Communities and Justice and the matter will be taken out of the hands of the church. In other cases, there may be no action taken by the civil authorities (for example, because the complainant does not want to go through a criminal trial) and Voyage will need to determine its response to the matter. In both cases, legal advice should be consulted on how to proceed.

Pastoral care

A victim of abuse may require immediate specialist counselling or other support in a compassionate and timely response. Victims often need ongoing contact and support and the Lead Pastor/s should ensure that an appropriate person is appointed to follow up with them. Other members of the church may also need specialist support.

If a leader informs the Lead Pastor or Safe Ministry Representative that a child has disclosed abuse to them, they should make sure that the above steps are taken. They should also ensure that the leader is appropriately cared for and supported. The leader may need to debrief about how the experience has affected them.



Emergency Evacuation Procedure

In the case of an emergency evacuation: **STOP**

1. Team Leader calls: **STOP** and blows a whistle
2. Everyone stops and turns to face the Team Leader and **FOLLOWS** the team leader to the designated meeting area away from the building.
3. The last leader is to perform a quick check of the rooms and toilets, calling for anyone to leave the building and assisting anyone leaving the building to the designated meeting area.
4. The team leader is to call **000** emergency service while the other leaders checks everyone is at the designated area.
5. Everyone is to **STAY** at the designate meeting area away from the building until emergency services calls the all clear.



5. Resources & Supports

Documents of the Voyage Safe Ministry Plan

The following documents are available at
<http://www.voyage.church/child-protection>

Voyage Safe Ministry Blueprints For:

- Voyage Overall
- Lead Pastor
- Safe Ministry Representative
- Children's Ministry
- Youth Ministry
- Parents and Church Members

Other:

- Role Description
- Application Form
- Safe Ministry Pledge
- Safe Ministry Online Training
<https://safeministry.training/>

Voyage Safe Ministry Representative

- Phone: 0427 203 477 & Email: smr@voyage.church

Department of Communities and Justice and other Crisis Numbers

- NSW Child Protection Helpline: 132 2111
- Mandatory Reporters Guide: reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/
- Domestic Violence Line: 1800 656 463
- NSW Elder Abuse Helpline: 1800 628 221
- National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1800 880 052
- Disaster Welfare Services: 1800 018 444
- Mental Health Line NSW: 1800 011 511
- NSW Victims Access Line: 1800 633 063

Police

- **Emergency Assistance: 000**
- Local Police: 6691 0799
- Crime Stoppers: 1800 333 000
- Police Assistance Line: 131 444

Other Services

- Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) for WWCC: 02 9286 7219
- Kids Helpline: 1800 551 880
- Headspace – Youth Mental Health Foundation: 66 521 878
(45 Little Street, Coffs Harbour)
- Lifeline: 131 114

Anglican Safe Ministry Team (Professional Standards Unit)

- Director: 02 9265 1514
- Request protocol and other documents: 02 9265 1604
- Safe Ministry website: <https://safeministry.org.au> & SM training website: <https://safeministry.training>



APPENDIX

NSW Working With Children Check

What is a Working With Children Check?

The NSW Working with Children Check (WWCC) is a government screening process overseen by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian. Anyone intending to work with children in NSW must get a WWCC. The WWCC involves a criminal history check (including convictions, charges and juvenile records) and a review of findings of misconduct. The result is either a clearance to work with children for five years or a bar against working with children.

Who needs a WWCC?

A Working With Children Check is a prerequisite for anyone in paid or voluntary **child-related work** in NSW.

"**Child-related work**" generally means work involving activities primarily related to children (including - in the case of religious bodies - youth groups, youth camps, teaching children and child care) that involve physical or face-to-face contact with children. However the general meaning is subject to a number of exemptions (including workers who are under 18 years of age) and extensions (including the Lead Pastor/s, assistant pastor/s and leaders as they are deemed to be undertaking child-related work where there are children).

If the contact with children is not direct or face-to-face, or the role does not primarily relate to children it will not be child-related work (such as serving morning tea to children after Sunday School).

Any and every person engaged in child-related work in Voyage must either:

- Hold a Working With Childrens Check clearance that has been verified with the Office of the Children's Guardian and is not subject to a bar,
- Have a current Working With Childrens Check application before the Office of the Children's Guardian, or
- Be subject to an exemption.

When must a person apply for a WWCC?

A person must apply for a WWCC and receive a clearance, or they must have a current application for a clearance with the Commission and have provided proof of identity *before engaging in any child-related work*.



What is the process for obtaining a WWCC?

There are two steps in the process:

- **The worker** must apply for a WWCC clearance, and
- **Voyage** must verify that the worker has a WWCC clearance.

Step 1: Applying for a clearance

The worker (employee or volunteer) must:

- Fill out an online application at www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au, or call 02) 9286 7219 if internet access is not available.
- Receive their WWCC application number,
- Take the WWCC application number and proof of their identity to a NSW motor registry. There is no fee for volunteers, but if it is a paid position, an \$80 application fee is payable,
- The applicant will then receive a WWCC clearance or bar by email (or post if there is no email address).

Most application will be process with 24 hours.

Step 2: Verification of the clearance

Voyage must verify that the worker has a WWCC clearance before engaging the worker in child-related work by:

- logging into their employee account at: www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au, and,
- entering the following information:
 - the applicant's name,
 - date of birth, and
 - WWCC clearance number or application number.

What is the result of a WWCC?

There are only two outcomes of a WWCC: a clearance or a bar. A clearance is valid for five years, and cleared applicants will be subject to ongoing monitoring. If an applicant is barred, it is an offence to engage the person in child-related work. If an applicant is barred, the Safe Ministry Representative is to immediately advise the Lead Pastor/s who must stop their involvement in all child-related work.



What records must be kept?

For each worker in child-related work, Voyage must keep the following records (either electronic or hardcopy):

- Full name,
- Date of birth,
- WWCC number,
- Verification date (the date Voyage verified them),
- Verification outcome (clearance or bar),
- Expiry date (when the WWCC number expires), and
- Status of the worker (paid or volunteer).

Who is exempt from needing a WWCC?

If a person is in child-related work but qualifies for one of the following exemptions, that person will not need a WWCC:

- (1) Workers in administrative, clerical, maintenance or ancillary roles not ordinarily involving contact with children for extended periods (such as a secretary or grounds-keeper),
- (2) Workers under the age of 18,

A person's date of birth should be verified from a reliable source of data, such as a birth certificate. A process should be established to alert the Safe Ministry Representative when the person is approaching their 18th birthday. A WWCC can be obtained once the person reaches 17 years and 9 months,

- (3) Workers working for not more than a total of five working days in a calendar year if the work involves minimal direct contact with children or is supervised when children are present,

It is recommended that churches not rely on this exemption as a matter of course due to the difficulty of keeping accurate records and in demonstrating that the requirements of the exemption have been met,



- (4) A visiting speaker or performer for a one-off occasion who will be in the presence of one or more adults,
- (5) Short-term emergencies where the engagement of the worker is necessary in the circumstances to prevent an increased risk to the safety of children and the engagement is not for more than five consecutive working days,

This exemption could be relied upon in a situation where a regular volunteer gives late notice that they are unwell or otherwise unavailable, and it would jeopardise the safety of the children concerned to run the activity without having another leader or leaders present. The church cannot rely on the same person on more than five occasions.

- (6) A parent or close relative of a child, when they volunteer in connection with an activity of which the child is a member or usually participates. A close relative means a sibling, grandparent, aunt or uncle, niece or nephew (or an equivalent step-relative).

It is recommended that churches don't rely on this exemption as a matter of course, as the risk of engaging in child abuse is not diminished by a person being a parent or close relative of a child in the group.

Voyage may find that the administration involved in keeping track of exemptions is more burdensome than adopting a simple policy that every person involved in child-related work must obtain a WWCC.

There is also a risk that the grounds on which a person qualifies for an exemption may change over time. Voyage could end up in a position where someone who is no longer entitled to an exemption is undertaking child-related work without a WWCC.

Are WWCC clearances portable?

WWCC clearances are portable within the period that they are valid. Once a person has obtained a clearance they can quote the WWCC number to other churches or organisations with whom they undertake child-related work. However, each church/organisation will still need to independently verify the WWCC number before engaging the worker in child-related work.

What if the applicant is from outside of NSW?

If the person is from interstate or overseas, Voyage should also consider obtaining a criminal record check from that state or country in addition to the WWCC. Voyage will need the person's permission in order to do so.

Further information regarding Working With Children Checks can be found on the Office of the Children's Guardian website:

www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/Working-with-children/working-with-children-check

For further information, factsheets and FAQs please visit www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au



VOYAGE CHURCH
WEB: VOYAGE.CHURCH
ABN:93 681 770 379