



**VOYAGE CHURCH**  
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# Safe Ministry Blueprint for Parents and Church Members

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

## **Safe Ministry Blueprints**

*Used by Permission Professional Standards Unit Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney*

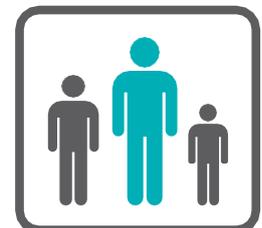


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### 1. Commitment to safe ministry

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.



The more parents and other congregation members are familiar with the Voyage safe ministry policies, the more able they will be to support the children’s and youth ministry leaders as they implement them, and identify breaches when they occur.

If you have any concerns about the safety of children or young people in ministry activities, please speak to the Lead Pastor/s or the Safe Ministry Representative in Voyage.

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.



## 2. General principles for ministry with children and young people

### **Children and young people have rights**

Children have the right to be safe and well looked after when they are in our care. They have the right to be protected, listened to and their particular needs addressed in all church activities, whether mixed age or child specific.

### **Leaders are responsible**

All those exercising a pastoral ministry involving children in the church have responsibility for the safety and welfare of the children in their care.

### **Abuse is power misused**

Leaders have authority over children because of their positional power and because of their greater age, maturity, physical size and life experience. Abuse arises from the misuse of authority or power. Any form of abuse is always wrong.

## 3. Screening and training of leaders

There are screening requirements for children's and youth ministry leaders, both under NSW law and the Voyage Safe Ministry Plan.



A person who wishes to volunteer or work in a children's or youth ministry position must actually:

- Obtain a WWCC clearance that must then be verified by Voyage,
- Make a formal application for the children's ministry position, providing references,
- Undertake Safe Ministry Training within 3 months of starting the children's ministry position, followed by a refresher course every three years, and
- Read, understand, and comply with the relevant Safe Ministry Blue Print and Pledge (Blueprints available at [www.voyage.church/child-protection](http://www.voyage.church/child-protection))

In addition, it is recommended that all volunteers are a member of Voyage for at least 6 months before entering into a children's ministry position. This provides time for a person's character and suitability for a children's ministry position to be observed.

The Voyage Safe Ministry Representative is required to keep records of leaders' WWCC clearances and safe ministry training.



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.

## 4. Code of Conduct for Children's and Youth ministry

The Code of Conduct for children's and youth ministry leaders is written to protect the children and young people in our churches, as well as to protect leaders from situations where their integrity or actions might be questioned.

A breach of the Code of Conduct may raise issues concerning a leader's fitness to continue as a leader. If you observe a leader or any church worker acting in a way which may be contrary to the relevant Code of Conduct, please inform the Lead Pastor/s, Safe Ministry Representative or the person responsible for Children's and Youth Ministry.



A children's or youth ministry leader or worker **must**:

- **Never** abuse children, young people or other vulnerable people, or cultivate relationship in order to initiate or cloak abuse of children or young people.
- **Never** be alone with a child or young person in their ministry role where other adults are not present.
- **Never** have children or young people to their home, or visit children or young people in their home, when no other adult is present, and never meet privately with a child or young person outside of church activities, except with the permission of their parent or guardian.
- **Never** touch children, youth, or other vulnerable people in a manner which is inappropriate given their age, gender, cultural background, or personal circumstances.
- **Never** physically discipline anyone, especially a child, youth or other vulnerable person in the course of my ministry.
- **Never** help children in ways that involve intimate care if the child is capable of doing it on his or her own (eg, toileting or changing clothes).
- **Never** make alcohol, cigarettes or illicit drugs available to children or youth.
- **Never** develop inappropriate special relationships with particular children, youth or other vulnerable people that could be seen as involving favouritism or any form of special treatment.
- **Never** engage in any contact with a child, young person, or other vulnerable people that is secretive (whether physical or through electronic media or in any other way).
- **Never** become romantically involved with any person under the age of 18 in the youth or children's ministry.
- **Never** take unauthorised photos, movies or recordings of anyone, especially a child or young person on church property or at church activities without church authorisation and the consent of their parents or guardians.
- **Never** view, possess, produce or distribute restricted material containing sexual acts or nudity without a legitimate purpose; and never view, possess, produce or distribute any form of child pornography or child exploitation material.



There are good reasons for this code of conduct. Those who seek to abuse children may use group-based activities in order to gain the trust of a young person. Having gained that trust, they may then engage in one-to-one activities that offer an opportunity for abuse to occur, including sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse of a child often starts with something relatively minor, but can then gradually build up to more involved behaviors through a process of grooming. Grooming is often characterized by secrecy.

This is why there must always be more than one leader/church worker present, and that no opportunities present themselves for a leader/church worker to engage in one-to-one activity with a child away from the presence of other adults.

A breach of this Code of Conduct may raise issues concerning a person's fitness to continue as a leader or church worker. **The Lead Pastor/s or the Safe Ministry Representative are to be informed if observations of another leader or church worker is acting in a way that may be contrary to this Code of Conduct.**

## 5. Guidelines for Children's and Youth Ministry activities



The guidelines that follow cover a wide array of issues for children's and youth ministry activities, such as the supervision of activities and their appropriateness, the physical safety of those involved, the importance of parental consent, transportation and trips away, forms of communication with young people, as well as the issue of meeting up with young people outside of programmed events. However, there are three golden rules that are relevant to all of the guidelines.

### THE GOLDEN RULES

#### Two or More

There must always be two leaders aged 18 years or over present for all children's and youth ministry events.

#### Never Alone

Leaders must not be alone with a child or young person during an activity, and should make sure, as far as possible, that other leaders are not left alone with a child or young person.

#### Stranger Danger

Leaders should be on the alert for people wandering around – a person unknown to the leaders or not part of the children's and youth ministry should not be allowed access to children and youth.



## **a. Supervision**

There must always be two leaders aged 18 or over present for all activities.

The degree of supervision required will vary according to the nature and environment of the activity, the age and maturity of the children or young people and the size of the group. Suggested supervision ratios for low- risk onsite activities would be: crèche and preschoolers 1:5 (one adult leader for every 5 children), primary school 1:7 (one adult leader for every 7 children), high school 1:10 (one adult leader for every 10 children).

## **b. Physical safety of children**

Children and young people should be meeting in a physical environment that is safe and suitable for them. There is a recommended checklist for the leader of the children's or youth ministry to use in assessing the safety of the physical environment where children's or youth ministry occurs.

## **c. Appropriateness of activities**

Leaders are expected to have thoughtfully considered what message children may learn from the way events are organised and conducted. Games or activities that could in any way emphasise gender, physical, intellectual or ethnic differences should be assessed for their appropriateness.

Careful consideration should be given to any activities or games that require children to act alone or in pairs independent of leaders to minimise the possibility of children being harmed.

Leaders are to review in their entirety any DVDs, youtube clips, computer games, graphics, photographs and lyrics that they intend to show to children or youth. In assessing whether something is appropriate leaders are to be governed by the age of the youngest child present. Censorship ratings should be kept to G or PG for children up to Year 6, keeping in mind that some G or PG material may still not be appropriate due to the themes it contains. For youth, leaders should make sure that any elements containing violence, sexual activity, nudity, drug use, coarse language or questionable lifestyle are appropriate for the intended audience. Care is to be exercised if a TV show, film or computer game has been recommended by the Office of Film and Literature Classification as unsuitable for youth of a particular age (eg, PG, M or MA classifications). MA rated material will rarely be suitable, and material rated M may or may not be suitable with parental consent.

## **d. Parental consent**

Leaders need a parent's written consent to take children or youth away from church premises. They are to keep parents informed of the place and timing of the event.

Leaders also need a parent's written consent to administer medications to a child. If a child has particular physical needs (eg, allergies), mental health needs (eg, depression) or safety needs, the parent should pass any relevant information on to the child's leaders.



## e. Transportation

It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to arrange transportation to and from children's ministry events for their child, unless another specific arrangement is in place.

Written permission from a parent is required before a child or young person can be transported in a vehicle driven by someone other than a parent for the purposes of a church activity.

**Leaders should avoid being alone with a child in a motor vehicle or driving a child home unaccompanied, even with parental permission. If such a situation is unavoidable, the leader should inform another leader of the trip and the reason for it.**

## f. Trips away

It is not usually appropriate to have children under the age of Year 5 sleeping over at events. When events involve children aged Year 5 and above sleeping over, ensure that the sleeping accommodation (where possible) is:

- segregated between males and females,
- supervised by more than one person, preferably including a parent or guardian, and ensure (where possible) that those supervising the sleeping accommodation:
- are of the same gender as the children being supervised, and
- do not sleep in close personal proximity to a child, unless they are a parent or guardian of the child.
- never share accommodation with only one child, unless they are a parent or guardian of the child.

Venues should allow for the privacy of all parties to be respected, particularly when changing clothes, washing and toileting.

## g. Communication

### Children

Leaders should not contact children by email, mail, social media, video calls, using chatrooms or by any other form of electronic communication. Leaders should not call or text a child on the child's mobile phone.

All electronic communication must be with the child's parent or guardian. On the rare occasions when a leader might need to speak to a child on the phone for ministry purposes, the leader is to call the child's parent to explain why he or she is calling. Only then, with the parent's permission, should the leader speak with the child. The leader should be conscious of keeping the conversation with the child short.

### Youth

Leaders and church workers are to be guided by the following principles in their communication with youth –



## THE TEN

### 1. ABOVE REPROACH

Communications should always be above reproach, both in terms of the content and the way it is communicated. Leaders should ask themselves: if this communication were to be made known to all of church, would they consider it to be appropriate? Leaders ought to be sensitive to the impact of the words and images used, to avoid offence or miscommunication. They must never use flirtatious, sexually suggestive, explicit or offensive language or images. Leaders ought also to be conscious of how things might look. They should be careful that the circumstances of their communication do not suggest that their relationship with a young person is inappropriate by, for example, communicating regularly or late at night. Even if a leader's motives are pure, misunderstandings can arise.

### 2. IN PERSON IS BEST

Face-to-face interactions are the best way to build relationships with youth. Leaders should not use electronic communications for matters that are pastorally sensitive, emotionally charged or that require a back-and-forth conversation. In those cases, it's much better to have a conversation in person. If a young person initiates a pastoral conversation with a leader using electronic communications, the leader should ask if they can talk about it with the young person the next time they see them.

### 3. BE TRANSPARENT

Be aware that those who wish to abuse young people may try to cultivate secretive or exclusive relationships through electronic communications. That is why it is so important for leaders to be transparent in all communications. Leaders should aim to keep communications public and brief. Long or intense conversations by electronic means should be avoided. If a young person initiates a conversation like that, leaders should consider how to redirect it to a more transparent forum or include other people in the conversation. That might mean talking face to face or including another leader in the communication with the young person's permission. At the very least, the leader should let their ministry leader know so that nothing is going on in secret. Leaders should also keep any emails, text messages or conversation threads with youth, in case an accusation is ever made or a misunderstanding arises.

### 4. DON'T INITIATE SOCIAL MEDIA FRIENDSHIPS

There is a power imbalance that exists between leaders and the youth they are ministering to. That power imbalance might make it difficult for a young person to say 'no' when a leader initiates a friendship on social media by, for example, sending a Facebook friend request or following them on Instagram. For that reason, it is best for a leader not to initiate, though a leader might choose to accept if the young person initiates a friendship.

### 5. SAFETY IN NUMBERS

Wherever possible, leaders should communicate electronically with groups rather than individuals. The best practice when sending emails or text messages is to include multiple youth or another leader in the message. When using social media for ministry purposes, closed groups should be used where possible (for example, Facebook) and youth should be directed to the group rather than to a leader's individual account if possible.



## **6. BUILD UP THE CHURCH**

When posting on social media, leaders should think carefully about the impact of what is being communicated on the entire church community (including children, youth and the vulnerable). It is important to remember that leaders are often seen as representing the church. Leaders ought to consider how they can build up the church community, and avoid being divisive, showing favouritism or making others feel excluded or inferior.

## **7. RESPECT OTHERS**

Leaders should be careful to observe confidentiality and privacy in electronic communications, for example, not publishing the names, contact details or other personal information of people online.

## **8. BE TRUTHFUL**

A leader should never hide their identity or pretend to be someone else. Electronic communications that seek to hide the identity of the sender or represent the sender as someone else should not be used in ministry in any circumstances.

## **9. KNOW THE DIGITAL TERRAIN**

When using social media, leaders should be aware of and comply with the terms of use, age restrictions, privacy options and controls for each site prior to using it in ministry.

## **10. REPORTING ONLINE ABUSE**

Laws regarding mandatory reporting of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of children and youth apply equally to the digital world.

## **AND FINALLY, USE COMMON SENSE!**

There may be exceptional circumstances that arise from time to time, and common sense might dictate that a leader deviates from their usual practice when it comes to electronic communications. In those situations, leaders must be transparent and above reproach and, where possible, should seek advice from their ministry leader.



**Recommendations about the sort of contact that is likely to be appropriate at different ages:**

Type of contact	Primary school Students	Years 7–9 Students	Years 10–12 Students
<b>Phonecalls</b>	Only after speaking to parent then, if the parent gives permission, with the child and only for ministry purposes.	To be avoided. Preferable to speak with the parent first and ask permission to speak with the young person.	Reasonable phone contact for ministry purposes permissible. Long conversations to be avoided.
<b>Text messages</b>	<b>X</b>	For logistical purposes only	For logistical purposes and encouragement
<b>Email</b>	<b>X</b>	For logistical purposes and encouragement only	For logistical purposes and encouragement
<b>Social networking (Facebook, Instagram, etc)</b>	<b>X</b>	Use discretion and keep in mind the 10 key principles above.	Use discretion and keep in mind the 10 key principles above.
<b>Video calls/streaming and chat rooms</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X Never</b>	<b>X Never</b>

**h. Photographs and videos**

Leaders should not take photos of children without parental consent. Leaders should not photograph any child who has asked not to be photographed. Photos of children should focus on small groups rather than individuals:

- Leaders should not identify in writing the person/s in the photograph, eg tagging on Facebook.
- All children must be appropriately dressed when photographed (eg, not in swimsuits or pyjamas). Embarrassing or offensive photos or videos must not be either taken or shared.

Parental permission must be sought before posting photographs or videos of children online. Privacy is of utmost importance and care should be taken to protect children from having their personal information being displayed on a social networking site or Church website.

Generally, videos should only be used to showcase/advertise ministry-related events and activities.

When video of services or activities is distributed or streamed on the web or via other broadcast media, signs and/or notifications should be posted that indicate the service is being or will be broadcast.

## 6. Age-specific guidelines

### a. Creche (0-2 years)

#### Health and Safety

Children should never leave the crèche area unless accompanied by the adult responsible for them.

Be aware of issues of hygiene. If a child vomits or soils an area of the crèche, that area should be cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible. Toys and equipment should be cleaned regularly.

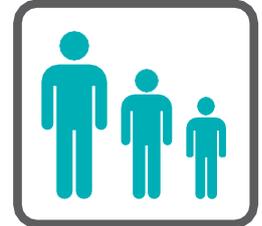
#### Parents

Where parents are readily accessible, they should be asked to change nappies and undertake toileting. If parents are not available, experienced female leaders should carry out these tasks, but always with another child or leader present.

#### Physical Contact

Very young children are highly dependent on touch for their proper development. This means that in dealing with them, leaders must be very aware of their needs at particular ages and stages.

Physical contact is primarily for the purpose of assisting or comforting a child for a short period of time. Leaders should not continue physical contact for longer than necessary to achieve this purpose. All physical contact should be in the open and able to be seen by others, for example, sitting on a leader's lap to be comforted should occur in view of others.



Appropriate physical contact for this age includes:

- Hand-holding to reassure or to guide,
- Offering open hugs (placing one arm around the child's shoulders) to welcome or comfort a child,
- Short periods of carrying, sitting on one's lap, rocking, rubbing or patting backs to comfort a child who is distressed,
- Sitting on one's lap to check discomfort or ill health,
- Sitting beside a leader to read a book,
- Necessary touching of genital areas while changing a nappy, and
- Appropriate touch to administer first aid or assist with personal hygiene, for example, changing clothes or blowing noses.

Inappropriate physical conduct for this age includes:

- Hitting or shaking
- Forceful grabbing or picking up, and
- Unnecessary touching of the genital areas.



## **b. Preschoolers (3-5 years)**

### **Health and Safety**

Parents & Guardians should observe their children at all times. Children should never leave the preschool area unless accompanied by the adult responsible for them.

Children of this age are generally toilet-trained and their parent or guardian should assist. If parents or guardians are not available, a leader/church worker should accompany a child to the toilet with another leader/church worker or child, but should assist the child only where necessary.

### **Physical Contact**

Except in circumstances of physical danger or medical emergency, children have the right to refuse touch. In general, physical contact should be initiated by the child or occur with their permission.

Appropriate physical contact for this age includes:

- open hug (with space between you) with the child's permission;
- placing arm around shoulder and giving a gentle squeeze from the side;
- patting backs;
- hand-holding to reassure or guide;
- sitting beside a leader to read a book;
- sitting on a female leader's lap to check discomfort or ill health;
- carrying for a short period to reassure if hurt or facilitate separation from a parent (providing the child wants to be held); and
- holding firmly across the upper arms to restrain or prevent injury.

Inappropriate physical contact includes:

- hitting or shaking;
- forceful grabbing or picking up;
- kissing or coaxing a child to kiss you;
- extended hugging or tickling;
- touching any area of the body normally covered by a swimming costume.



## c. Infants and primary age children

### Health and Safety

Leaders should have clearly thought out procedures for the conclusion of the program and advise parents of them. Infants will generally need to be collected by parents. If the children's ministry is held off-site, there should be clear guidelines and procedures to follow. The following issues need to be thought through:

- Are children taken there by parents or leaders?
- How are children collected?
- How is communication maintained between off-site groups and the main congregation?

### Parents

Parents should be kept informed of details of the ministry, including the names of leaders, current and future curriculum, and upcoming special events, etc.

Leaders ought to be considerate of parents by being careful about children's clothing, eg, wearing paint shirts when painting and avoiding extra rough games.

### Physical Contact

Appropriate physical contact for this age includes:

- open hug (with space between you) with the child's permission or placing arm around shoulder and giving a gentle squeeze from the side,
- high fives, and
- holding firmly across the upper arms to restrain or prevent injury.

Inappropriate physical conduct for this age includes:

- hitting or shaking,
- forceful grabbing,
- kissing or coaxing a child to kiss you,
- extended hugging or tickling,
- touching any area of the body normally covered by a swimming costume, and
- sitting children on a leader's lap.



## 7. Reporting abuse

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.



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.

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. Indicators of children who are at risk can be found in the *Safe Ministry Blueprint for Voyage Overall*.

**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/s 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 and these are found in the *Safe Ministry Blueprint for Voyage Overall*.

**If a child discloses abuse or if abuse is observed or suspected or if a someone informs you of concerns regarding a child, young person or vulnerable person, 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.

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



As soon as possible after the disclosure, take the following actions -

**a. 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](http://www.safeministry.org.au).

**b. REPORT the information to the appropriate authorities**

**REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND DISCLOSURES**

Issue or Concern	Report to:
General Suspicions	<b>Lead Pastor* or Safe Ministry Representative**</b>
Child or young person currently at risk of significant harm	<p><b>Department of Communities &amp; Justice (previously known as FaCS)</b>            If possible discuss with your Head Ministry Leader or Safe Ministry Representative first and use the Mandatory Reporters Guide <a href="https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg">https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg</a></p> <p><b>Police</b>            Contact the police first if the situation requires emergency assistance.</p> <p><b>Lead Pastor* or Safe Ministry Representative**</b>            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><b>Police</b></p> <p><b>Safe Ministry Representative** or Lead Pastor/s*</b></p>
Child abuse by a church worker, congregational member or church attender.	<p><b>Lead Pastor* or Safe Ministry Representative**</b></p> <p><b>Police</b></p>



- *\*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*

Contact the Safe Ministry Representative if you are unsure of what to do in any circumstance or where an allegation is regarding a Lead Pastor.

The person to whom a disclosure is made should not undertake their own investigation, and should not disclose the allegations to the alleged offender at this initial stage.

## REPORTING SUSPECTED ADULT ABUSE AND DISCLOSURES

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.

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



- *\*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 Safe Ministry Representative if you are unsure of what to do in any circumstance or where an allegation is regarding a Lead Pastor.

## 8. Responding to Abuse

### 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.

If you have had someone disclose abuse to you, you will also need to be appropriately cared for and supported. You may need to debrief about how the experience has affected you.

## 9. Further information

If you have any questions or require any further information, please speak with the Lead Pastor/s, the Safe Ministry Representative or the leader of the youth or children's ministry in Voyage.





# 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.



## 10. Resources & Supports

### Voyage Safe Ministry Plan documents

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

#### Voyage Safe Ministry Blueprints For:

- Voyage Overall
- The 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](mailto:smr@voyage.church)

#### Department of Communities and Justice (previously known as FaCS) and other Crisis Numbers

- NSW Child Protection Helpline: 132 2111
- Mandatory Reporters Guide: [reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/](http://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
- Safe Ministry website: <https://safeministry.org.au>
- SM training website: <https://safeministry.training>