



Gymea Anglican Church

Children's and Youth Leader Expectations

Introduction

Rev. David Fell
Senior Minister

Thank-you!

Dear friends, thank you for volunteering in kids and youth ministry. I still remember the day I took note of this verse:

I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 1:12-14)

Ministry is not a job or a weekend routine, it's a privilege to be chosen and used by Jesus. Whether you're serving in creche, Kids Church, DropZone or BTX thank you for your commitment to helping others come to know the grace of the Lord Jesus and to grow in His grace.

Safe Ministry

We recognise that with the privilege of ministry comes responsibility. We have a high calling to care for the Lord's sheep to protect the vulnerable among us and especially the very young. They're precious to the Lord. And we account to Him for their welfare.

The protection of the vulnerable, especially children, is a consistent theme in scripture and one which we at Gynea Anglican and in the Diocese of Sydney take very seriously. The Lord has strong words for anyone who causes one of His of little ones to stumble. When abuse of any person occurs at the hands of those given the responsibility of serving others in Christ's name, in it is a grievous breach of trust and an inexcusable misuse of privileged position and influence.

It's my prayer that this booklet, which includes an orientation to our suite of safe ministry materials will not only raise your consciousness of the importance of protecting children and other vulnerable persons but also provide you with practical advice so that both our policy *and* our behaviour might be best practice.

Simple Ministry

Ministry is simple. Not easy - it's anything but easy. But it's simple. In Colossians 1:24-29, Paul describes the content, method, and goal of his ministry.

The content: Jesus.

"Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom..."
(Colossians 1:28).

The method: Paul worked hard at presenting Jesus in the context of all of Scripture. All it takes is a willingness to suffer to proclaim Christ's sufferings (1:24) along with lots of hard work (1:29).

The goal: to *"present everyone mature in Christ"* (1:28). Our goal focuses on eternity. We are in the business of preparing people to stand before Jesus.

It can be tempting to think that we need a complex philosophy of ministry. We don't. We need a lifelong commitment to the simplicity of the gospel. Let's proclaim Jesus as the fulfilment of Scripture and the Saviour of the world. Let's work hard to do so. Let's aim to love the children and young people entrusted to us. Let's work hard to get them ready for when they will stand before Christ. And if we devote our lives to these things, then perhaps we will find that the simplicity of this focus will lead us to a depth that can't be found anywhere else!

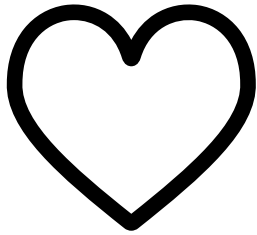
Your friend in Jesus,

David.



Gymea Anglican Church

As Children's and Youth Leaders at Gymea Anglican Church, our job is to...



Love Jesus



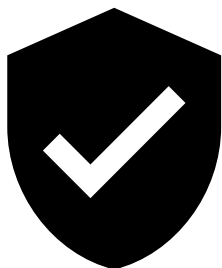
Church



Life Group



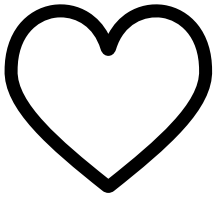
Love Each Other



Safe Ministry



Leader Development



Love Jesus

Be a person who has a growing relationship with Christ (John 15)

Strive to develop a daily habit of personal Bible reading and prayer, including praying regularly for those you lead.



Church

Be a person who is a committed member of God's Church at Gymea Anglican (Romans 12)

Demonstrate the importance of gathering together with God's people at one of our services.



Life Group

Be a person who is growing in knowledge and love of God with others (Ephesians 3)

Encourage and build one another up by joining a community of believers.



Love Each Other

Be a person who models godliness in living out the gospel of God's grace (1 Timothy 4)

Seek to share the gospel and encourage everyone to faith and maturity in Jesus.



Safe Ministry

Be a person that ensures the ministries you serve in are safe (Matthew 19)

Ensure you are current in Safe Ministry accreditation, have a Working with Children Check and are familiar with the Faithfulness in Service and Blue Print policies.



Leader Development

Be a person who is a reliable team player and eager to grow as a leader (2 Timothy 4)

Attend leaders events, meetings and be active in communications and the in the ministry itself.

Becoming a Leader

Meeting with Ministers to assess suitability

The pathway to becoming a leader begins with an assessment of your suitability to serve with Children and Young people in God's Church. This may be formal or informal, and will usually traverse the following topics:

- The regular things you do to grow as a disciple of Christ
- Any experience you have in leading children and young people
- How will you work to ensure that the children and young people in our care will be safe?
- Any training you have had that is relevant to serving in the ministry

We would also invite you to share anything with us that could prevent you from, or hinder you in, exercising godly ministry in the ministry.

Invitation to become a leader

After meeting with a Minister to assess your suitability you may be asked to continue to the next step. Without completing the following steps, no one may lead children or youth.

Safe Ministry Check

This is a confidential pastoral check and screening process, which asks a series of questions regarding your personal history and requests referees to affirm your suitability to serve. We will confirm your identity in this process and you will formally agree to the code of conduct by signing this document.

Working With Children Check

The Working with Children Check (WWCC) is a requirement for anyone who works or volunteers in child-related work in NSW. It involves a National Police Check and a review of reportable workplace misconduct.

Safe Ministry Training

You will need to complete the online Safe Ministry course (and refresher course every three years) delivered by the The Office of the Director of Safe Ministry (ODSM). You can do this online at: safeministry.org.au

Quarterly Team Planning and Development

Each quarter we meet to plan ahead of a new term. On these occasions we both plan for our ministries and train (safe ministry, disability, creative and engaging ways to present talks etc.) in equal amounts.

Policy Pack

You'll receive a suite of information via email after being invited on team.

Our Safe Ministry Policy

Our Church has adopted the statement below in regard to Safe Ministry. The principles in this policy guide how we facilitate our ministries to children and young people.

Our safe ministry commitment

GyMEA Anglican Church is committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, particularly within its own community. To ensure the safety of children and vulnerable people in our communities, GyMEA Anglican, in conjunction with the Anglican Church of Australia, will:

- Carefully recruit and train its clergy and church workers,
- Adopt and encourage safe ministry practices by its clergy and church workers,
- Respond promptly to each concern raised about the behaviour of its clergy and church workers,
- Offer pastoral support to any person who has suffered abuse, and
- Provide supervision of and pastoral accountability (within the context of the ministries, locations and activities of the parish) to any person (who is a member of a congregation and) who is known to have abused a child or another vulnerable person.

Our screening and training of leaders

Leaders of ministry to children and young people at GyMEA Anglican complete the following:

- A Safe Ministry Check and assessment with the Senior Minister or his delegate
- Obtain a WWCC clearance that is verified by the parish,
- Safe Ministry training prior to undertaking ministry to children, followed by a Refresher course every three years, and
- Read, understand, and comply with Faithfulness in Service.

Our Code of Conduct

Anyone in a position of leadership with children and young people must agree to and abide by our code of conduct. You will learn about this code in your Safe Ministry Training and agree to this in your Safe Ministry Check.

A children's or youth ministry leader must:

- Never abuse people especially children or youth, nor cultivate relationships in order to initiate or hide abuse.
- Report to the appropriate authorities any behaviour that could be considered abusive. This includes speaking to the head ministry leader about behaviour by another leader.
- Never be alone with a child or young person in their ministry role where other adult leaders are not present.
- Never have children or young people to their home or visit children or young people in circumstances where no other adult is present, except with the permission of their parent or guardian.
- Never touch children or youth in a manner which is inappropriate given their age, gender, cultural background, context or personal circumstances.
- Never physically discipline a child or young person in the course of their ministry.
- Never make alcohol, cigarettes or illicit drugs available to children or youth.
- Never develop special relationships with particular children or youth that could be seen as involving favouritism or any form of special treatment.
- Never engage in any contact with children or youth that is secretive (whether physical or through electronic media or in any other way).
- Never use electronic communication with children and young people in a manner inconsistent with the guidelines for appropriate use as set out in this Blueprint document when communicating with people under their leadership.
- Never become romantically involved with any participant in the youth or children's ministry where they are a leader.
- Never take unauthorised photos, movies or recordings of anyone, especially of a child or young person on church property or at church activities without church authorisation and the consent of the child's parents or guardians.
- Never view, possess, produce or distribute restricted material containing sexual acts or nudity; and never view, possess, produce or distribute any form of child pornography or child exploitation material.

The Ten Child Safe Standards

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse recommended 10 child safe standards based on its findings, extensive research and consultation. The NSW Office of the Children's Guardian seeks to support us to implement these standards.



By implementing the standards in our church ministries we will create and maintain a child safe culture. The 10 Child Safe Standards are as follows:

Standard One | Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture.

This standard ensures we work to grow a culture of child safety at Gynea Anglican. We do this by prioritise child safety in what we say and do, at every level of leadership.

Standard Two | Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

This standard seeks to ensure that we:

- Encourage children to speak up and are know that they will be believed.
- Enable children to express their views and provide them with opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them.
- Inform and educate them in age appropriate ways about their rights and about sex and abuse.

Standard Three | Families and communities are informed and involved.

Our ministries are better if they families and church members are actively engaged to support children. This standard encourages us to be open and transparent about our processes, governance and behavioural expectations particularly concerning child safety.

Standard Four | Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account.

This standard requires us to respect diversity and uphold equity to ensure that more vulnerable children are not put at greater risk. Our parish needs to actively anticipate children's diverse circumstances and respond effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities (e.g. children with disabilities, children from CALD backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children).

Standard Five | People working with children are suitable and supported.

The aim of this standard is to guarantee that we attract, recruit, supervise and support staff to keep children safe. It ensures that we have proper recruitment, induction, training and screening processes in place and provide ongoing supervision and training in child safety.

Standard Six | Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused.

This standard requires that we have a child focused complaint handling system that is understood by children, staff, volunteers and families to ensure that children are the priority when responding to complaints of abuse. Complaints must be taken seriously and responded to promptly and the we must meet reporting, privacy and ordinance obligations.

Standard Seven | Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.

This standard seeks for people working with children to receive training on child maltreatment, particularly abuse that occurs in organisations (including how to prevent it, identify it and respond to it) as well as training about our child safe practices and protection strategies.

Standard Eight | Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.

This standard requires risks to children in physical and online environments to be identified and minimised. The online environment should be used in accordance with our code of conduct and relevant policies.

Standard Nine | Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.

This standard encourages us to continuously improve our child safe practices through regular review, including being informed by analysis of complaints to identify causes and systemic failures.

Standard Ten | Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe.

According to this standard our policies and procedures should address the child safe standards and be accessible and easy to understand. Policies should be developed and informed by best practice models, understood and implemented by staff and championed by leaders.

The Safe Ministry Policy Suite

Our Church has adopted for use a number of documents that the Anglican Church has developed on a national and diocesan level. These policies serve as the benchmark for what is acceptable conduct by leaders of children and young people and what are acceptable standards for the organisation and administration of the ministries we run.

As a leadership team, we will spend time regularly reflecting and highlighting aspects of these policies to refresh our commitment to them. It is expected that you would have read the Faithfulness in Service and the Blueprint that applies to you before commencing your service. Please speak to a minister if you have any questions or concerns.

Faithfulness in Service

This is the national code of conduct that anyone serving in a leadership position in an Anglican Church in Australia.

Leaders who serve agree to abide by the Faithfulness in Service and our ministries operate keeping this code in mind.

Safe Ministry Blueprints

These documents are critical for all leaders to understand as they provide practical and specific information about how we maintain a safe ministry environment. They help to ensure greater awareness, transparency and accountability.

There are different types of Blueprint for different roles, together with a Blueprint Parents and members.

Grievance Policy

This policy has been developed by the diocese and approved by the Synod. It outlines the way in which allegations of unacceptable behaviour by staff are managed. Allegations against leaders in the parish are generally managed following steps one and two on page 4.



Social Contact Policy

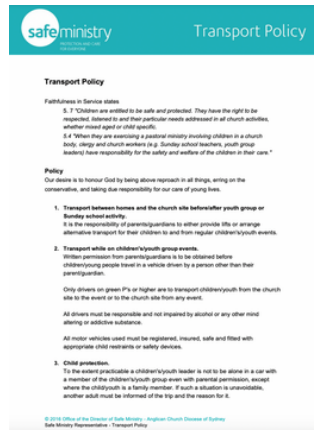
This policy describes the way in which leaders navigate contacting children and young people outside of ministries, when it is appropriate to do so. This should be read together with the *Top Communication Principles* in the Blueprint on page 32.

If in doubt, please speak to a leader about how to communicate online in an appropriate way.



Transport Policy

This policy outlines the three basic principles which underpin our rules about transporting children and young people in our care. As a general principle, transport is a matter for parents to arrange and written permission is sought for all other circumstances.



Everyone All: Accessible Church For All

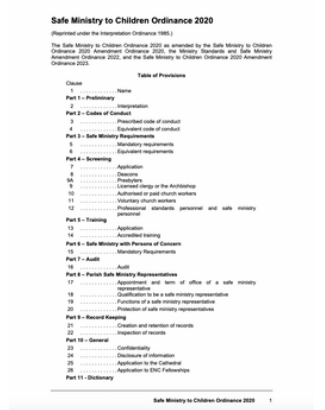
All children in our care are to be loved and respected as they bare in the image of God just like us. This report to the Synod guides the staff as we all continue to foster an environment that seeks to be welcome and accessible to everyone. It is not anticipated that leaders have read this in full, but it may be of assistance from time to time.



Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020

This Ordinance outlines the specific requirements of those who are invited to undertake a leadership position in our church with Children or Young People.

The Ordinance (church law) was passed by the Synod (parliament), and requires the need for all leaders to have valid Working with Children Checks, a current Safe Ministry Training Certificate and a completed Safe Ministry Check.



Documents We Use Everyday

Separate to the policy documents, there are a number of documents and forms leaders and ministers will use from time to time when managing issues that arise in ministry.

Some of these will be utilised when managing serious matters relating to the safety and protection of children and young people - if appropriate, please speak to a minister if you believe they need to be used, and support and pastoral care will be offered to you.

Risk Identification Register

Our ministries must be safe and welcoming environments. To do this, the staff maintain a Risk Identification Register, which catalogues any risk we find and how we plan to mitigate them. We also review risks using this document.

To view our completed register at any time, please chat to a member of staff. You can also raise a risk with them at any time.

Incident Report

From time to time, an incident will occur that requires a record to be maintained. You may be asked to fill out an incident report, which are available from the Children's Ministry office.

Incident Reports are filed and kept in a secure location on the Church premises.

Risk of Harm Report

When a child or young person shows indications of, or discloses abuse, a Risk of Harm Report is used. The report also assists leaders and staff when making a report to the relevant authorities. Should you need to use these, staff will guide you through the process.

Risk of Harm Reports are filed and kept in a secure location on the Church premises.



Our Parish Safe Ministry Guidelines

Whilst we utilise and follow policies and practices developed by the diocese, there are times when our ministers will identify specific scenarios and situations and provide clarity as to how we manage them.

Over the following pages you will see a number of Gymea specific scenarios, together with procedures to follow in the event of a disclosure.

Specific Toileting procedure

Infants (0-2)

- No nappies to be changed by ministry leaders
- Alert parents and return child to them to change
- A nappy change table is located within disabled bathroom

Toddlers (3-5)

- A female leader should walk the child to the disabled bathroom
- Allow the child to use bathroom themselves
- If in need of assistance of using toilet, collect parents to help
- No leader should be alone with a child during this time, remain in the glass breezeway
- Leaving the door open, the leader may assist the child in washing hands and walking back up to the ministry area

Children (6-12)

- Have sight of the walking to and from the bathroom
- If you have escorted children to the bathroom, do not enter, remain in the glass breezeway
- If you think assistance is required, call out to child from external bathroom door

Youth (13+)

- If you have escorted children to the bathroom, do not enter, remain in the glass breezeway
- Do not enter the bathroom
- If you think assistance is required, call out to child from external bathroom door.

Managing Behaviour of Children and Young People

Challenging behaviours can occur when ministering to children and young people. Our response in general is that:

- We use clear words when identifying what the issue we are seeking to address is with them
- We use appropriate physical restraint if there is a risk that the child may injure others or themselves

The general advice in taking necessary restraining action is to where possible, hold the child at arm's length from behind, facing away from yourself and any others in the immediate surrounds until they settle down. Any words spoken should be clear and calm, avoiding shouting or raised pitch.

Such incidents should be reported to parents with an explanation of the restraint. The coordinator will complete an incident report after.

Going on a Slurpee Run

A minimum of two leaders must accompany children on all excursions walking in front and behind them. Children must be under the direct control of leaders at all times. Ensure that the group cross roads at the intersection in an appropriate way. Ensure your leader to child ratio is appropriate.

A Child or Young person who becomes violent/dangerous.

- Move other children or young people away from the incident
- Inform the coordinator of the incident
- Speak to the child or young person in a clear and calm tone
- Don't raise your voice or threaten the child or young person with consequences as it could inflame the situation
- Do not restrain the Child or Young person unless they are likely to be putting themselves or others in extreme danger
- If unable to calm them, call the Child or Young person's parents
- If the incident remains dangerous, call 000
- The coordinator will complete an incident report and submit an incident report

Legally restricted persons arrives

Inform the ministry coordinator immediately. Under the law of trespass, if someone enters the property without permission you can ask them to leave. If they refuse to go when asked, and you could use reasonable force to remove them. Rather than resorting to force to remove the trespasser, our preferred action is to call the police immediately and ask them to come and remove the trespasser and charge them. Submit an incident report after.

A Child or Young person who discloses or reports abuse to you.

- **Listen to the child or young person:**

1. Stay calm and give your full attention to the person disclosing.
2. Give them time to say what they need to say in their own words.
3. If necessary ask open ended questions to encourage the person to explain their story (e.g. "Can you tell me more about that?") but don't pressure them for details.
4. Be supportive but don't try to counsel them or investigate what is being said.

- **Reassure the Child or Young person that:**

1. They have done the right thing in speaking out.
2. They have a right to be safe.
3. You will support them as best you can.

- **Think before you speak**

1. Don't promise that the abuse will stop.
2. Don't promise that you will keep it secret.
3. Only speak to a person who needs to be involved in reporting the suspected abuse.

- **Report**

As soon as possible pass the information onto the appropriate person/authorities using the reporting guide.

- **Debrief**

It's important you debrief with a minister about what you have heard. It may have been distressing to hear and support is available to you too. If the allegation concerns a minister support is available through the Office of the Director of Safe Ministry.

A Child or Young Person requires First Aid.

- Two leaders are required to be present for the delivery of First Aid, of which at least one needs to be trained.
- The main kit is available from the kitchen.
- Parents should be informed if First Aid was required and an incident report should be completed after.

A Child or Young person who leaves or runs away.

- It is recommended that Children or Young people go home with their parents or friends
- No child or young person is to catch a train home or walk home alone regardless of a parent's permission
- If the child or young person runs away, inform the coordinator.
- The coordinator will inform the parents or caregiver
- If the child or young person is in immediate danger call 000
- Send 2 leaders to search for them. Do not chase, but follow
- Verbally encourage them to return. Don't raise your voice or threaten the Child or Young person with consequences as it could inflame the situation
- Do not use physical force, if they are unwilling to return try to maintain a visual of them
- The coordinator will complete an incident report afterwards

A Child or Young people who is dressed improperly / nudity

- Two leaders of the same gender to speak with the Child or Young person
- Encourage the child or young person to dress more appropriately.
- If applicable, give them space and a T-shirt to cover up sensitive areas.
- If the issue is recurring see coordinator to contact the parent or guardian.

A Child or Young person who has disclosed suicidal thoughts to you.

- Leaders should always listen and care for Children and Young people who are struggling with this issue.
- Recognise the limits of your skills and experience. We are not trained counsellors or psychologists; we are simply there to listen.
- If you suspect that the Child or Young person is in risk of significant harm call 000 immediately, as well as their parents and a minister.
- If not in significant harm, direct them to a minister.
- Complete an incident and risk of harm report.

A Child or Youth who are suspected to have drugs and / or alcohol in their possession.

- As is the case with leaders, it is unacceptable for a Child or Youth to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- If they are in possession or under the influence of drugs or alcohol call a parent or guardian to pick them up.
- The coordinator will complete an incident report.

Fire

- Remove people from danger and inform your coordinator.
- Follow instructions for an evacuation (located on the walls in the hall, church foyer and church office).
- Call 000.
- Mark a roll of attendance to confirm everyone is present.
- Complete an incident report.

Bomb Threat

- Remain calm and ensure that you and others are in a safe and secure location.
- Record the time/place/details of the electronic device when the threat was made and if the threat is made in writing, minimise the handling of all documents (letters/envelopes, etc) until the evidence is handed to the Police.
- Immediately contact your local police station or dial "000" to report the threat, if possible, in the presence of another responsible person.
- Write down instructions given by the police and implement the instructions.
- Unless contrary to Police instructions, report the incident to the Minister and a Warden.
- Complete an incident report.

Storm / dangerous weather

- In the event of dangerous weather, outside activities should be held inside, or a change of program should take place.
- Consideration should be given as to whether the event can take place (e.g. picnic at the park). In the event that it cannot, parents should be informed that the event has been canceled and instructed to pick their children up.

Assessing risks in ministry activities

- If you identify a risk these should be raised with the ministry coordinator or staff member.
- They will be assessed and the risk lodged into the risk identification register, with the plan to mitigate them if required.
- The risk is then assessed by staff each quarter.

What do if I suspect the code of conduct has been breached?

- Please speak to a staff member in any instance.

What do if I need to meet one to one with someone?

- The model for this is to be open and transparent, seek permission from staff and parents beforehand, and debrief with staff after.
- Your meetings should be in public at all times and in places where other people can see you.