



ENGADINE &
HEATHCOTE
ANGLICAN

Guidelines for Disclosure of Risk by a Child, Young Person, or Vulnerable Person

Faithfulness in Service (2017) states:

- 5.1 - Children are entitled to be safe and protected. They have the right to be respected, listened to and their particular needs addressed in all church activities, mixed age or child specific.
- 5.2 - Ministry where children are involved requires absolute trustworthiness.
- 5.9 - If you are exercising a pastoral ministry involving children in a church body you are to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and welfare of the children in your care.

Careful Listening, Positive Responding

Careful listening and positive responding to children and young or vulnerable people is a vital way of letting them know that we value them and love them. It is also a crucial way in which we can protect those in our care. When we carefully listen to others we hear all they are saying which may at times include an indication of abuse or harm to a child or young or vulnerable person.

Disclosure

Whilst confidentiality is an important aspect of relationships with children and young or vulnerable people it is important to make it clear that there are limitations. When a child or young or vulnerable person wishes to speak with you it is important to let them know that there are limitations to your confidentiality and that in some situations you are required to let someone know.

Examples of these situations would be:

- When a person is in danger.
- If a person makes a threat to harm themselves or others.
- If you become aware that a criminal offence may have been committed.

***A church worker has a responsibility to respond to this information.
This may include breaching their confidence.***

What to Do

What to do if a child or young person discloses something that causes you concern:

- **Stay calm** and listen to what you are being told.
- **Do not** be dismissive of what they have told you, even if it is someone that you know (e.g., don't respond by saying "That can't be true".).
- **Convey** that you are hearing what they are saying whilst avoiding strong reactions to what they are revealing.
- **Don't** reflect back to a child/young person what they are saying – a child/young person's testimony can easily be discredited if it can be shown that another person has made suggestions to them, which could unintentionally happen when reflecting the story back to them.
- **Don't** promise not to tell. Explain that you may be required to report the matter, but only to those who need to know. There can be no secrets with some serious issues.
- **Don't** ask any more questions than is necessary to be clear about what the child/young person is telling you. Any questions should be simple 'what', 'how', or 'where' questions and not questions that suggest an answer, e.g. "Were you in the shed?" It is important that the number of times the child/young person recounts the story is kept to a minimum.

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- **Remember:** You do not have to decide if the child/young person is telling the truth, nor do you have to prove what has been disclosed.
- **As soon as possible** after the disclosure write a record of what the child/young person said and what you said. Include such information as details of the individual, time and place.
- **Don't** promise to resolve the situation. You cannot guarantee to do this.

Who to Inform

ENGADINE (with HEATHCOTE) ANGLICAN PARISH requires all youth leaders and children's leaders to notify THE INCUMBENT SENIOR MINISTER of all situations as soon as possible if:

- A person is in danger.
- A person makes a threat to harm themselves or others.
- You become aware that a criminal offence may have been committed.

Do not discuss the matter with anyone else.

If the alleged perpetrator is the INCUMBENT SENIOR MINISTER, then contact an appointed Contact Person from the Anglican Abuse Report Line on 1800 774 945.

Department of Family and Community Services

If you have reasonable suspicion that there is a child (under 16 years old) at risk of harm, it should be reported, either by yourself or the Senior Minister, to the Department of Community Services on 132 111.

Local Police

If you have become aware that a criminal offence may have been committed that involves a person over the age of 16 years, you should report that to the local police.

Professional Standards Unit

In the context of Sydney Anglican Churches, a Contact Person from the Anglican Abuse Report Line and the employee of the person against whom the allegation has been made (and/or the minister) may also need to know. A contact person can be reached on:

02 9265 1514 (Director)
02 9265 1500 (Chaplain)

They will be able to assist you as to who else may need to know about it and whether a report to Community Services, the police or the Professional Standards Unit should be made.

Supporting the Child / Young Person / Vulnerable Person

- Reassure the child / young / vulnerable person that you are there to support them.
- Talk with pastoral staff, if appropriate, about how to provide sustainable support.
- Don't promise that you can deliver more than you can provide.

Sometimes situations may arise where leaders feel out of their depth. Be aware of your limitations and understand that it may be more appropriate to refer to children/youth to experts, such as doctors or councillors. In that case:

- Determine the wishes of the child / youth / vulnerable person - do they want help?
- Are they able to make appropriate decisions about what is best for them?
- Determine the nature of the problem e.g. medical? Emotional?

If you consider it is appropriate to refer the child / young / vulnerable person, then contact their parent(s) / guardian(s) who will refer them to a specialist. Our role is one of support for the child / young / vulnerable person and the parent(s) / guardian(s).

If you are unsure about who to suggest for referral, talk to the incumbent senior minister or the Professional Standards Unit on 02 9265 1500.

Aim

To protect children (0-16 years), young people (16-17 years), and other vulnerable people (of any age) from any form of abuse within the parish of Engadine (with Heathcote) Anglican Church.

Explanation

Abuse refers to any form of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect. The Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney "Child Protection Guidelines, 1st Edition 2001" outlines the procedures to be followed concerning 'employment screening, reporting, disciplinary proceedings and prevention'.

Policy

The 'Child Protection Guidelines' are to be followed for employment screening, reporting, disciplinary proceedings, and prevention.

All persons working in any capacity, paid or unpaid, with children and/or young people must sign a Prohibited Employment Declaration (Attachment 4, Working With Children Check).

All paid employees working with children and/or young people must also sign a Consent Form (Attachment 3, Working With Children Check).

All persons working with children and/or young people are required to complete the 'Child Protection Essentials training'.

The Children's Ministry Coordinator and the Youth Ministry Coordinator are responsible for ensuring all workers have completed the 'Prohibited Employment Declaration'.

The Senior Minister is responsible for ensuring all paid workers have completed the 'Consent Form'.

At least two (2) leaders will be present and supervising children and youth at all times.

If a child or young person is suspected of being abused, the Ministry Coordinator of the child's or young person's activity (i.e. Children's/Youth) must be notified as soon as is possible, and the procedures followed as outlined in the 'Child Protection Guidelines'.

If an allegation is made against a worker, the Senior Minister must be notified immediately and the procedures followed as set out in the 'Child Protection Guidelines'.

This policy is to be continually reviewed to reflect new legislation as it is enacted.