



ANGLICAN  
DIOCESE OF  
MELBOURNE

# Code of Conduct for Child Safety & Wellbeing

Approved by Archbishop in Council

under section 14 of *Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016*

Version 3.0, updated April 2023



*Making the Word of God fully known*

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 ADOM is committed to promoting and protecting the interests, rights, safety and wellbeing of children and young people, and providing a supportive environment where every child has a place and a voice. ADOM has no tolerance for abuse or harm to children and young people.
- 1.2 ADOM understands it has legal, moral, pastoral, and biblical responsibilities to keep children and young people safe.
- 1.3 This Child Safety Code of Conduct (**Code**) was drafted with the help of the Safe Ministry Reference Group, parish leadership, staff, families and children and is approved by the Archbishop in Council. It has been drafted taking into account ADOM's diverse community and the needs of children from different backgrounds.
- 1.4 Most importantly, the Code aims to protect children and young people, and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur.

## 2. Theological foundations

- 2.1 When Jesus spoke to his disciples, he said they were not to be like the rulers of the day who used their authority to lord it over others. They were to be servants of others, even as Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:42-45).  
  
When Peter wrote to the Christians throughout Asia Minor, he reminded them of their identity in Christ as God's chosen people, who had been sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:1-17). The call to be holy is reflected in both the Old and New Testaments as the appropriate response to God's grace. Christians live according to the knowledge that they have been created by God and redeemed by Christ.  
  
When Paul wrote to the Philippian Christians he rejoiced in their fellowship and prayed that their love might grow in knowledge and discernment so that they might be enabled to live pure and blameless lives for the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:9-11). They live out God's love in their contact with others, especially those to whom they minister in Christ's name.
- 2.2 The Church is the fellowship that nurtures and sustains Christians as they seek to follow Christ faithfully and participate in God's mission. Its leaders especially are to be examples of Christian faith and obedience as they exercise their vocation, in dependence on the Holy Spirit.
- 2.3 The personal behaviour and practices of pastoral ministry required of ordained clergy (bishops, priests and deacons) of the Anglican Church of Australia are specified in the Holy Scriptures as well as in its Constitution, canons, ordinances, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal. Although they are not bound by the promises made by ordained clergy, lay people who are employed by or hold a role, office or position within the Anglican Church of Australia are expected to conform to the same behaviour and practices as ordained clergy in relation to ministry to children.

## 3. Purpose

- 3.1 ADOM has no tolerance for child abuse. The Code aims to make ADOM's community and parishes safe places for children and young people. We want to promote child safety and wellbeing in the ADOM environment and protect children from child abuse and harm.

- 3.2 The Code sets out ADOM's expectations of people covered by the Code when they work with, provide ministry to, and/or are in contact with children.

#### 4. Scope

- 4.1 The Code applies to:
- (a) all Church Workers;
  - (b) the Archbishop of Melbourne; and
  - (c) third party contractors engaged by ADOM to work with children (**Contractors**),  
who must comply with this Code.
- 4.2 The Archbishop, Church Workers and Contractors may interact with children outside of usual ADOM settings. This includes outside usual hours, usual Parish activities or Parish premises. This Code applies to these interactions, and to interactions that occur in physical and online environments.
- 4.3 The Code applies in all areas of '**the ADOM environment**', which includes:
- (a) the offices of ADOM's Anglican Centre;
  - (b) the premises of an ADOM Parish or Authorised Anglican Congregation (**AAC**);
  - (c) online or virtual ADOM environments (including email, intranet systems, portals, telecommunication, social media software applications, collaboration tools, online services and other online communications); and
  - (d) any other locations provided by or connected with ADOM, or through a third-party provider for a child's use, including, but not limited to, locations used for camps, excursions, activities and events, Sunday School, Youth Groups, and home-based congregation (such as for the purposes of a Bible Study or Prayer Group).
- 4.4 This Code applies regardless of:
- (a) a child's age;
  - (b) a child's consent;
  - (c) the consent of parents/guardians and families; and
  - (d) circumstances in which a child initiates an interaction or relationship with a person covered by this Code.
- 4.5 This Code must be read together with any relevant laws, ADOM's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Procedure, the Safe Ministry Policy, Faithfulness in Service, the Professional Standards Uniform Act, and any other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular Church Workers at ADOM.
- 4.6 Where there are differences between this Code and the Faithfulness in Service, this Code will prevail.

4.7 The Code incorporates the standards set out in these sections of the Faithfulness in Service:

(a) section 3 (Putting this Code into Practice) so far as they relate to section 5 (Children), and

(b) section 5 (Children),

when read with section 1 (About this Code) and section 2 (Key Terms).

4.8 Other key terms in this Code are set out at section 10 of this Code.

## 5. Breaches of the Code of Conduct

5.1 A breach of the Code may constitute misconduct as defined in Section 5 of the *Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016 (Act)*. This may call into question a person's fitness for their role, office or position with ADOM.

## 6. Required Behaviours

6.1 To help ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, all people covered by this Code must:

(a) call 000 if they have serious or immediate concerns for a child's safety;

(b) act consistently with their position, and behave as a positive role model to children;

(c) only undertake ministry within their competence, certification or training, and otherwise arrange for any such ministry to be provided by an experienced person or specialist agency;

(d) take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse, harm and/or the risk of harm;

(e) maintain professional boundaries and strict impartiality at all times;

(f) comply with all professional, pastoral, ministerial and/or employment obligations relevant to the person's role with ADOM;

(g) when making transport arrangements, take reasonable steps to ensure that:

(i) all drivers or operators are licensed, screened, responsible, experienced and are not impaired by alcohol or any other mind-altering or addictive substance; and

(ii) all motor vehicles and other forms of transport used are registered, insured, safe and fitted with appropriate child restraints or safety devices (e.g. seat belts, life jackets).

(h) provide appropriate supervision and care for children and consider the nature and environment of the activity, the children's age and maturity, the size of the group, and the children's individual characteristics, abilities and needs, such as disabilities and cultural factors;

- (i) comply with ADOM's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, this Code and other applicable policies and procedures at all times;
- (j) promote cultural safety, and actively encourage and support the participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island child's identity);
- (k) support and encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights;
- (l) respect the language, customs, religions, political differences, identities, abilities and cultures of children, including by:
  - (i) making a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children;
  - (ii) treating all children with equity and respect, regardless of race, cultural, linguistic or social origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, or other status;
- (m) promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with disabilities, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) children (for example, by having zero tolerance for discrimination, racist, bullying and phobic behaviour towards children);
- (n) ensuring games and activities for and with children include all children and do not inappropriately emphasise gender, physical, intellectual, linguistic or cultural differences;
- (o) establish and maintain a child-safe environment which includes using positive and affirming language towards children;
- (p) empower children to understand their rights, and encourage and empower their participation in decisions affecting them. This includes encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in matters that are important to them, and encouraging friendships and support between children;
- (q) listen to the ideas and concerns of children and young people, particularly if they disclose that they are or another child has been abused or harmed, or that they are worried about their safety or the safety of another child;
- (r) report any suspected breaches of this Code to the Director of Professional Standards in accordance with the *Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016*;
- (s) immediately report any allegations of abuse or risk of harm to children (including concerns about child safety, bullying, discrimination and harassment) according to ADOM's policies and procedures and section 17 of the *Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016*;
- (t) where there is an allegation of child abuse, act as quickly as possible to make sure that the child involved is safe;

- (u) respect the privacy of children and their families, and act in accordance with ADOM's Privacy Policy;
- (v) immediately notify ADOM and Kooyoora if they are being investigated in relation to their conduct towards children (including criminal or civil investigation), are charged with any offence related to children or family violence, receive a negative Working with Children Check notice, are the subject of a Reportable Conduct Matter whilst employed in another organisation, or are named as a respondent in a family violence or personal safety intervention order;
- (w) exercise good judgment and sensitivity in terms of appropriate physical contact with children, and only engage in physical contact with children where it may be necessary, professional and beneficial and/or supportive;
- (x) where physical restraint or intervention is needed for the safety of children or another person, as soon as possible, accurately record the details of the incident including reasons for the physical contact and any witnesses.
- (y) interact with children online only for the purposes of pastoral ministry, or to organise events. There must be prior consent from each child's parent or guardian. The details of the online communication must be recorded (including times, dates, participants, topics and any proposed actions) as required by the Parish Records Guidelines;
- (z) comply with any lawful and reasonable direction by ADOM or the relevant Parish; and
- (aa) cooperate with any investigation by ADOM, Kooyoora, or any regulatory authority including Victoria Police and the Commission for Children and Young People.

### **Unacceptable Behaviours**

6.2 All people covered by this Code must not:

- (a) ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse or risk of harm to a child (which includes concerns or suspicions of child abuse or risk of harm);
- (b) discourage any person from reporting a complaint or concern of child abuse or risk of harm to children;
- (c) interact with a child in a way that could be seen as grooming or favouritism (such as offering gifts or special treatment of a child) unless they are a parent, guardian or relative of the child;
- (d) drive a child in their car unless they have the express consent of the parent, carer or guardian of the child, and a second adult is present (unless they are a parent, guardian, carer or relative of the child);
- (e) engage in, or encourage unnecessarily physical conduct towards or in the presence of, a child (including sitting on laps, cuddling, hugging, rough physical games, holding, massaging, kissing, cuddling, touching children in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way, touching any area of the body normally covered by a swimming costume, specifically

- the buttocks, thighs, chest, breasts or groin areas, and doing things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes);
- (f) interact with a child in a way that could be perceived as threatening, intimidating, derogatory, demeaning, culturally insensitive or humiliating;
  - (g) subject a child to any form of corporal punishment or physical violence;
  - (h) put a child at risk of harm or abuse (for example, by locking doors);
  - (i) discuss personal, overly-familiar or adult content in the presence of a child unless they are a parent, carer, or relative for that child (for example, by speaking about personal social activities or one's intimate relationships);
  - (j) use inappropriate or sexualised language towards or in the presence of child (including swearing, sexualised jokes or conversations);
  - (k) discuss sexual activities with a child unless it is a specific job requirement and the person is qualified or trained to discuss these matters;
  - (l) be naked, shower or change in the presence of a child (unless they are the parent, guardian, carer or relative of that child);
  - (m) share with or expose a child to sexually explicit materials (e.g. magazines, photographs, images, online material, cards, videos, films etc.);
  - (n) possess, access, solicit, transmit, or produce child abuse material;
  - (o) sleep in the same bed, sleeping bag, tent, room or cabin with a child unless they are a parent, guardian or relative of the child;
  - (p) have children spend the night at the residence of that person without prior approval of a parent, carer or guardian, unless they are a parent, guardian, carer or relative of the child;
  - (q) photograph or video a child without the consent of ADOM and the child's parent or guardian (unless they are the parent, carer or guardian of the child);
  - (r) discriminate against any child because of an attribute protected by discrimination law, including their gender identity, race, sexual orientation, sex or disability;
  - (s) have any online or electronic contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging, etc.), unless:
    - (i) that contact is only to provide information about ADOM or is otherwise for the purposes of pastoral ministry; and
    - (ii) there is another relevant adult included in any online communication; and
    - (iii) prior written consent is obtained from the child's parent, carer or guardian; or
    - (iv) they are a parent, carer, guardian or relative of that child.

- (t) use any personal communication channels or software (such as a personal email account, social media or instant messenger account) to contact children;
- (u) exchange personal contact details with children such as phone numbers, social networking sites or personal email addresses (unless they are a relative of the child);
- (v) post images of children on Parish or AAC communication channels with personal information (i.e. personal addresses, phone numbers, email address and instant messaging names);
- (w) become 'friends' with, follow or add a child on any social media platform (unless they are a parent, carer, guardian or relative of that child);
- (x) share, request or use any photographs, videos, recordings or personal information about children without the consent of the parent or guardian, including on any social media platforms;
- (y) engage in any conduct to change or suppress a child's gender identity or sexual orientation;
- (z) work with a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol;
- (aa) consume illegal drugs at ADOM, Parish or AAC events in the presence of children while performing their duties for ADOM;
- (bb) supply any child with illegal drugs or alcohol, except wine in the context of a Holy Communion service; or
- (cc) spend time alone with a child unless it is in view of other adults.

## 7. Privacy

### *Disclosing Information to Church Workers, Contractors or the Archbishop*

- 7.1 When a child communicates with a person covered by this Code in connection with their role at ADOM, that interaction is confidential to ADOM and not to the individual. This means people covered by this Code can identify the child or young person when talking to another person covered by this Code. Wherever possible, the privacy of the child should be respected. When a person covered by this Code is required to interfere with a child's privacy, information should be shared on a 'need to know basis'. Who and how many people are told should be limited as much as possible considering the best interests of the child. People covered by this Code should always seek guidance from a Child Safety Officer of ADOM.

### *Disclosing Information to People External to the Organisation*

- 7.2 People covered by this Code should not discuss confidential matters about children with people outside ADOM in a way that identifies a child. This is unless they have the express consent of the child, their parent or guardian, or the disclosure complies with legal or reporting obligations, including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Procedure. Disclosures to external agencies including the police, Commission for Children and Young People and Department of Health and Human Services are permitted.



## 8. Related Policies and Procedures

- 8.1 Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- 8.2 Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Procedure
- 8.3 Faithfulness in Service
- 8.4 Safe Ministry Policy

## 9. Related Legislation

- 9.1 [Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)
- 9.2 [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)
- 9.3 [Crimes Act 1958 \(Vic\)](#)
- 9.4 [Change or Suppression \(Conversion\) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 \(Vic\)](#)
- 9.5 [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#)
- 9.6 [Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016](#)

## 10. Key Terms

**Church** in this document means the Anglican Church of Australia.

**Church authority** has the meaning in the *Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016* (Diocese of Melbourne).

**Church body** is defined in the *Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016 (the Act)* and includes a parish, vicar, parish council, the Dean or Chapter of the Cathedral, a school affiliated with the Church, Anglicare Victoria and any other body corporate, organization or association that exercises ministry within, or on behalf of, the Church.

**Church Worker** has the same meaning as defined in Section 3 of the *Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016 (the Act)* and includes but is not limited to a “prescribed church worker” and “church volunteer” as defined by Schedule 1 of the Act.

See: <https://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Professional-Standards-Uniform-Act-Adoption-Act-2016-Reprinted-as-at-1-January-2024.pdf>.

**Clergy** means collectively all clerks resident in the Diocese or licensed by the Archbishop.

**Kooyoora** means Kooyoora Limited, ACN 616 776 919.

### Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I hold the following roles, offices or positions in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne (**ADOM**):

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At the following Parish/es or organisations/Church bodies:

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I have read, understood and agree to be bound by ADOM's:

- Code of Conduct for Child Safety and Wellbeing
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Procedure
- Safe Ministry Policy

I acknowledge that I am:

- Responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children.
- Responsible for upholding and acting in accordance with the standards in the Code of Conduct for Child Safety, including in my physical and online interactions with children.

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Witness Name: .....

Witness Signature: .....