**The Anglican Parish of Christ Church Essendon**

**Child Safe Policy 2019**

**About this Policy**:

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment that the clergy, parishioners and volunteers associated with this Parish have to child safety. It provides a brief statement and overview of the strategies this Parish has in place to ensure children are protected from harm.

**Policy Statement**:

At the Anglican Parish of Christ Church Essendon we embrace diversity and want **all** children to feel welcomed, safe and nurtured in their wellbeing. We provide a child safe environment with a zero tolerance of discrimination and abuse.

We as a Church are aware of how common abuse is, that churches are sanctuaries of healing and safety - and yet they have been used to engage in, or excuse sexually abusive and other harmful, discriminatory or prejudicial behaviour. We do not condone this, and apologise to those who have been harmed in the past. There are no excuses for abuse - and that it is never a child’s fault, but that of the abuser, and of the other adults around who fail to protect and speak out.

**Our commitment to child safety**

We commit ourselves to valuing diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. We are taking steps towards promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of **all** children and families including children of Aboriginal descent, children of culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability. We actively encourage the participation of children of all levels of ability and their families.

We commit to action to stop people who go against or ignore this policy.

We commit ourselves to valuing and upholding **all** children’s rights to safety and participation by encouraging children to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to ‘have a say’ about things that are important to them. We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us. We provide information to parents and children on how they can raise their concerns and report incidents if the situation arises.

We commit to best practice for recruiting staff and volunteers according to the Diocesan Guidelines. We ensure that all those working with children hold a current ‘Working with Children Check’ and in some instances Police Checks. We provide training, support and supervision for all our staff and volunteers. All those working with children are provided with Duty of Care information from the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne and are expected to comply. This information can be found in booklet form in the church narthex and online at:

<http://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/mission/youthchildrenfamily/childrenfamily/Pages/Duty-of-care.aspx> ..

We are committed to a Code of Conduct for a Child Safe Church which provides guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom will receive training on the requirements of the Code, including detection of behaviour that may be construed as grooming. We educate staff, volunteers, parents and children about the expected standards of behaviour and what will happen if a person does not comply. We listen to and act on concerns or allegations of non-adherence to the Code of Conduct.

We commit to listening to child safety concerns and responding promptly. We have appointed several Child Safety Persons with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. Our complaints processes are outlined in the booklet “Information for people thinking about making a complaint” available in the Church narthex and online at: [www.melbourne.anglican.com.au](http://www.melbourne.anglican.com.au) All also have the option of making a complaint to the police.

We commit to an ongoing Risk Management approach as this enables us to minimise the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning.

In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to children.

We have an ongoing commitment to review this policy. It will be reviewed at least every three years. We will continue to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers and use these to inform out policy.

**If a child is at immediate risk call 000**

Diocese of Melbourne – Professional Standards (Kooyoora Ltd): ph 1800 135246

**Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams (SOCIT)**

Brimbank: (03) 9313 3460 Melbourne: (03) 8690 4056 Child Protection: 1300 360 391

*Policy updated April 2017, August 2017, August 2019*