



SAFER MINISTRY POLICY 2016



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We affirm that all people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe, respected, and express their views and opinions at the appropriate time and place. We also live in a country that legislates for people's safety. God calls His body to minister to vulnerable people. God identified classes of vulnerable people who were to be protected and given special care and treatment in society because of their powerlessness (Ex 22:21-22, Deut 10:17-19, Jer 22:2-4, James 1:27).

Our policy has been developed to help us live out our Biblical mandate and our responsibilities under Australian legislation.

This policy is for use by local churches, and organised groups throughout the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement in Australia and New Zealand. This policy applies to members, officers, staff, volunteers, attendees, and participants in the local church and its programs and activities.

Our Policy Aims To:

- minimise the risk of abuse, misconduct and the misuse of positional power.
- ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and misconduct are handled thoroughly.
- ensure that leaders and programs are safe.
- ensure that all people are respected and valued.

We Commit To:

- 1. Safe recruitment of church leaders (paid and voluntary).**
 - a. We will screen all prospective leaders in our departments and ministries, before they are appointed. (ie. relevant working with children's check/vulnerable people/police check as legally required).
 - b. We will have a minimum church attendance policy for all prospective officers and leaders, including transferring members, who have indicated a willingness to work with children.
- 2. Adequate training of officers and leaders.**
 - a. We require that all church officers and leaders, including children/youth leaders, attend a safer ministry awareness workshop or equivalent within their first year of office or service and attend a refresher workshop or equivalent every 3 years.
 - b. We require all officers/leaders attend additional department/officer-specific training as deemed necessary by AUC policies.

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3. Continued supervision of church officers/leaders.

- a. We commit to ongoing leadership training, supervision and support for officers/leaders.
- b. All officers/leaders will agree to follow our Code of Conduct.

4. Responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and serious misconduct.

- a. All Officers/leaders will report disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, in accord with our church procedures.
- b. All disclosures or allegations of a criminal nature will be reported to the relevant Statutory authorities such as the Police and Government Child-Protection Services and Church authorities.
- c. Where a leader has an allegation of ministry misconduct made against them, we will provide support to alleged victims and perpetrators and seek appropriate denominational help for a just and fair resolution.

5. Safer environments in our ministry events, programs and departments.

- a. We will serve participants as servants of Christ, commit to the good news of Jesus Christ and lead in spiritually non-abusive ways.
- b. We will encourage participant contributions by facilitating involvement in the programs and the activities ensuring that we value their input and concerns.
- c. We will obtain appropriate information relating to the program participants under 18, including children's health and family situation, to ensure that we are able to care for their physical and emotional needs.
- d. All leaders will discharge their duty of care through the use of forms, checklists and templates for establishment and maintenance of safer environments in our church.
- e. A ChurchSafe Coordinator, or Team, will be appointed at the Conference/Field level. Local churches will appoint a ChurchSafe Coordinator. In lieu of appointing their own Church-Safe Coordinator, local churches may nominate the Conference/Field ChurchSafe Coordinator as their ChurchSafe Coordinator. Those responsible will ensure this Safer Ministry Policy is implemented according to the procedures outlined in the ChurchSafe Manual, including the ChurchSafe screening process for appointment of church officers/leaders (please refer to Chapter 6).
- f. A WHS Coordinator, or Team, will be appointed at the Conference/Field level. Local churches will appoint a WHS Coordinator. In lieu of appointing their own WHS Coordinator, local churches may nominate the Conference/Field WHS Coordinator as their WHS Coordinator. Those responsible will implement: WHS procedures, including fire safety, building safety, first aid, food safety, safe transport, incident and emergency procedures.

For further details on the implementation of this Safer Ministry Policy and the associated forms for use, please refer to the ChurchSafe Manual 2016 on hand at your local church. This Safer Ministry Policy is taken from Chapter 3 of the ChurchSafe Manual 2016.
