Implementing the Child Safe Standards

A Guide for Faith-Based Organisations

The Child Safe Standards

STANDARD 1

Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

STANDARD 2

Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

STANDARD 3

Families and communities are informed and involved

STANDARD 4

Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account

STANDARD 5

People working with children are suitable and supported

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Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused

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

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STANDARD 10

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

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Foreword

The aim of this Guide is to provide faith-based organisations with practical help to implement the Child Safe Standards and the related National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. It gives practical tips for faith organisations and includes examples which showcase how different organisations are already implementing the Standards and how they've established systems to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse.

While the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse focused on sexual abuse, this Guide aims to prevent all kinds of abuse children may be subjected to.

Sadly, while the Royal Commission looked at historical instances, we are aware that child abuse still occurs in some faith-based organisations. For this reason organisations need to remain vigilant and ensure they have systems and strategies in place to prevent it occurring.

While it isn't possible to profile all of the good work being carried out in NSW, the examples and links in this Guide will help help you on your child safe journey. The Guide should be considered 'a living document', as the intention is to add further information in future editions as more is learned about child safe practice.

Significant steps have been taken by many faith-based organisations to enhance their child safe practice, to create useful tools and resources, and make clear public statements of their commitment to child safety.

This Guide supports the creation of 'communities of practice' so that learning from each other and pooling resources can drive a shared vision of continuous improvement. Many of the faith leaders and safeguarding professionals consulted during the development of this Guide are eager to reach out to organisations with limited resources and less experience to help them build a safer environment for children and young people. They include:

Lachlan Bryant, Anglican Diocese of Sydney

Bishop Peter Stuart, Newcastle Anglican Diocese

Phillip Bonser, Anglican Diocese of Grafton

Melinda Rixon and Anita Biddle, Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay

Damian Reeves, Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga

Julie Patston, Catholic Diocese of Lismore

Jon Flood, Presbyterian Church

Jonathan Bradford and Katie Watson, Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT

Natalie Mobini, Baha'i Community

Bronwyn Murphy, Uniting Church NSW

Allyson Parker, Australian Christian Churches

Claire Pirola, Brigidine Sisters Australia

Anne Gowen, Buddhist Council of NSW

Jackie Blum, Board of Jewish Education

Gurmeet Kaur, National Sikh Council of Australia

Myriam Bahari, Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese

Glossary

Laypeople:	Workers in faith-based organisations who are not clergy, nor ordained
Clericalism:	A culture where religious leaders are seen as above others and are not questioned or challenged
Person of Concern (PoC):	Refers to any person that has a 'proven' or 'alleged' or 'currently being investigated' history of causing harm to children or vulnerable people
Staff:	Includes all adult employees, contractors and volunteers
Children:	Children and young people under 18
Policies:	Documents which describe the intention of an organisation when addressing specific issues
Procedures:	Documents which describe, in practical terms, how the aims of policies will be met
Codes of Conduct:	Lists of do's and don'ts which describe acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour
Guide to the Child Safe Standards:	Companion to this document which allows faith-based organisations to ask reflective questions on how they have incorporated the Child Safe Standards to keep children safe from abuse. Available from the OCG website here
Engaging Sensitively with Survivors:	A document giving specific advice for faith-based organisations seeking to engage with survivors of abuse. Available from the OCG website here
The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse:	Established by then Prime Minister Julia Gillard, the Royal Commission inquired into the responses of institutions to instances and allegations of child sexual abuse in Australia. The commission examined the history of abuse in educational institutions, religious groups, sporting organisations, state institutions and youth organisations and delivered 350 recommendations to prevent it happening. One recommendation was the introduction of the Child Safe Standards
Child Safe Standards:	A list of ten Standards that organisations can use to keep children safe from harm and abuse. They are:

- Standard 1: Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
- Standard 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
- Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved
- Standard 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account
- Standard 5: People working with children are suitable and supported
- Standard 6: Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused
- Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training
- Standard 8: Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur
- Standard 9: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved
- Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

Standard 1

Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

Outcome

Organisations prioritise child safety in what they say and do.

Safety challenges identified in the Royal Commission

Many of the organisations looked at by the Royal Commission had hierarchical structures where leaders had high levels of power compared to their members. People holding power in faith-based organisations were vested with a lot of trust, treated as sacred and rarely had others to whom they were accountable. Often leaders would hide behind their status or would protect others in positions of power who had offended.

Leaders were inclined to protect their institutions and reputations, rather than the best interests of children. There were also many cases of conflicts of interest. Theological perspectives that viewed abuse as a moral failing also contributed to poor child safe cultures.

What are some of the barriers faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Changing culture takes time

- Governance structures are often complex and may be resistant to change
- Difficult to get some older members of the community on board with any type of change
- 'Tick and flick' approach will not change culture. This requires ongoing commitment
- Short term appointments of leaders reduce accountability and impact on governance.

Needs resourcing

- Some leaders have other jobs
- Scarcity of personnel with necessary professional skills and training
- Organisations may be run by volunteers who are time poor and lack financial support
- If expertise is outsourced it can cost money.

Structure of organisation

- Some small and independent entities do not have effective governance structures
- Some faiths are 'community led' and find it difficult to introduce formalised processes to make systemic changes.

What should we be doing?

- The organisation makes a public commitment to child safety, and leaders champion a child safe culture both inside and outside the organisation
- Child safety is a shared responsibility at all levels of the organisation
- Risk management plans focus on identifying, preventing and lowering risks to children
- Staff understand and comply with Codes of Conduct that set clear behavioural standards when interacting with children
- Staff understand their obligations in reporting, sharing information and keeping records.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Promote cultural change

- Develop a Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, Child Safe Policy and Codes of Conduct that are displayed prominently and which are easily understood by children, families and the community
- Leaders regularly communicate about the organisation's collective responsibility for child safety. This is promoted:
  - during services
  - when running activities with children
  - at community events
  - on social media
  - on noticeboards
  - in newsletters
  - in annual reports
- Make child safety a standing agenda item at management and committee meetings
- Print reports on your organisation's responses and attitudes to abuse
- Develop relationships with other community organisations that support child safe practices.

Safeguarding Committees

- Establish a child safety committee to give advice on best practice approaches to child safety, investigative practice and ongoing support for survivors of abuse
- Consult with professionals to build the capabilities of the committee

- Appoint a safeguarding role to be responsible for promoting safe practices
- Develop Child Safe Risk Management Strategies for all the services and activities you provide
- Hold forums within your faith organisation to consult on policies and practices that relate to child safety.

Safeguarding networks

- Seek out or develop your own professional safeguarding network
- Share or pool resources for activities that may attract a cost or take time to develop.

Work collaboratively with survivors of abuse

- Find out about what support advocacy organisations can offer survivors of abuse[1]
- If requested, facilitate commemorations for those who have survived abuse
- Familiarise yourself with *Engaging sensitively with survivors – a guide for faith organisations*[2]
- Establish support services for people who have been affected by abuse.[3]

Participate in events that promote child safety

- Celebrate National Child Protection Week, National Apology to Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse, Safer Internet Day and other events that specifically promote child safety.

> " **The bottom line in all matters regarding abuse is one and only one thing: protecting the innocent. Not the reputation of an individual, not the reputation of the community, not anything but the welfare of our children.** "
>
> Jewish Journal 2013

How have faith-based organisations implemented this Standard?

Establishing a safeguarding committee

The Anglican Diocese of Sydney has appointed a Safe Ministry Board which has the responsibility of encouraging parishes and other Diocesan organisations to be child protection aware, compliant and responsive. The Board is tasked with ensuring that child abuse issues are dealt with properly. This includes the development and review of child protection policies, oversight of safe ministry training and supporting professional standards personnel. The Board must include an experienced lawyer and at least four men and at least four women as well as people with professional training and/or experience in the areas of child protection, social welfare or counselling. The Board meets monthly on average and reports annually to the Diocesan Synod.

Transparency and accountability in practice

The Australian Jesuit Province website publishes an annual report solely dedicated to its child safeguarding activities and progress in implementing key Royal Commission recommendations. The Australian Province has committed to publishing any complaints of child sexual abuse committed by an adult that are received by the Province in that year, which includes reports that relate to previous decades or to someone who is now deceased.

Acknowledging abuse of the past

At Maitland-Newcastle Catholic Diocese, a Perpetual Day of Remembrance is held on 15 September each year. The Diocese works with survivors, schools and the wider community to plan events that acknowledge child sexual abuse. Conceived by a survivor and facilitated by the Diocese, Lina's Project[4] was a community event of atonement for what the Diocese describes as its 'well-known and shameful criminal history of child sexual abuse'. The project included a personal address and apology to the community by the Bishop, and a public presentation which named those priests, teachers and other Diocesan workers who perpetrated child sexual abuse or concealed it.
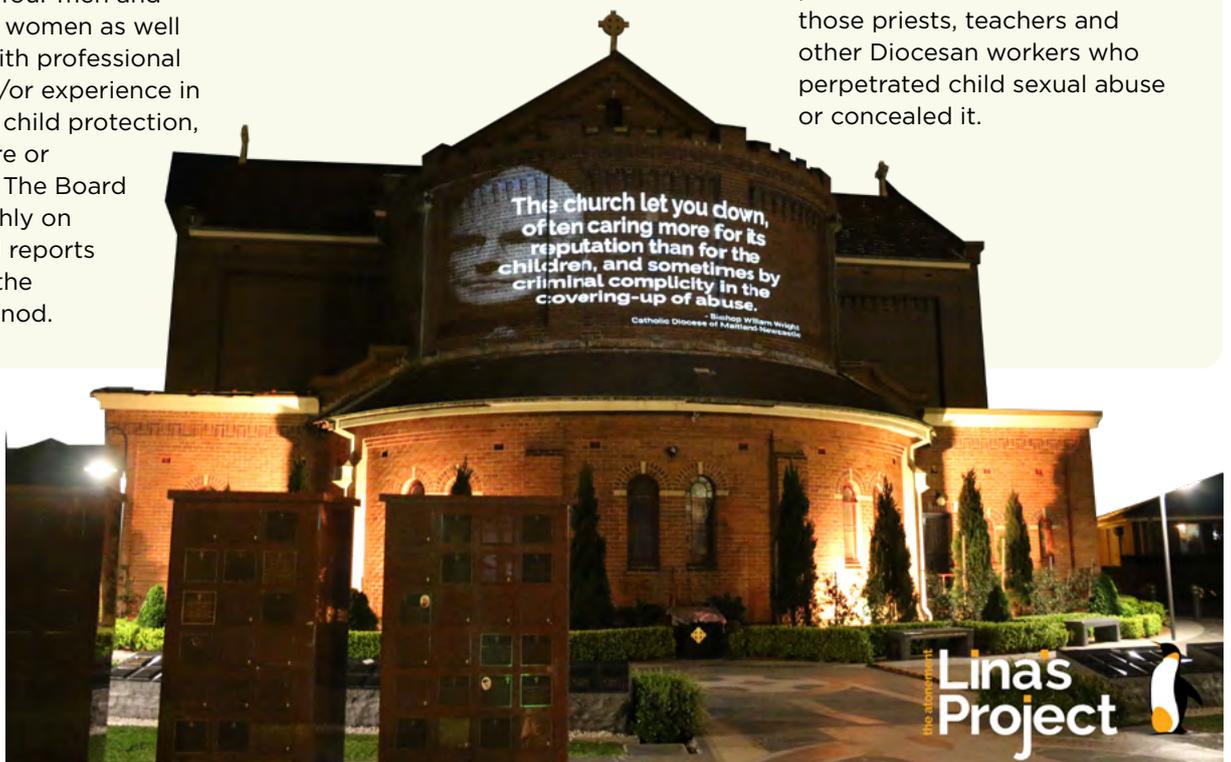
Standard 2

Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

Outcome

Children are encouraged to speak up and are believed.

Safety challenges identified in the Royal Commission

Places of worship were meant to be safe places for children. People working in these environments were given unsupervised access to children which created opportunities for abuse to occur. Often children's voices were not heard, they were not listened to and were not believed if they spoke up about abuse.

In many faith-based organisations, the topics of sex and related subjects were regarded as sinful and taboo. This resulted in children not being taught what was acceptable behaviour and what was not. Further, perpetrators used religious doctrine and beliefs to excuse abuse and used grooming behaviour to silence and control the children they were abusing.

Imagine Nations Church, Penrith

What are some of the barriers faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Decreasing attendance of children
- Fewer children now attend places of worship
- Children don't like the activities on offer
- Children are made to come by their parents and don't want to be involved in activities
- Running children's programs is seen as 'too risky' so less programs are offered
- Little or no buy-in from children in taking opportunities to provide feedback.

Perceptions of families and the community in the organisation's role in providing sex education and protective behaviours
- Confusion as to why faith-based organisations should run workshops when this is taught in schools
- Families don't want their children discussing sex
- Concern this might be perceived as a way of grooming
- Volunteers might not have appropriate training for such sensitive discussions which could create additional risks.

Lack of expertise in supporting children
- Not having the right skills and knowledge to work with children
- Children not feeling as though their feedback is important or that they will be listened to.

What should we be doing?

- Children are able to express their views and are provided opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives
- The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, helping children feel safe and less isolated
- Children can access abuse prevention programs and information
- Staff are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children to communicate and raise their concerns.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Ensure children know their rights
- Promote the Conventions of the Rights of the Child to children, staff and the broader community
- Link children's rights to religious doctrines and promote these messages regularly.

Appoint a Children's Advocate
- Appoint a suitable person who has been carefully selected and trained for the role to be a point of contact for children to go to
- The Advocate can report to the Board and senior management on children's concerns
- Where possible, have one male and one female advocate.

Communicating with children and young people
- Use age-appropriate platforms to regularly seek the views of children about how you work with them (including what they like and dislike)
- Use child-friendly communications
- Create a Child-Centred Feedback Tool to assist children to provide feedback.

Consult children and young people
- Ask children to organise projects and events
- Invite children and young people to become members of your organisation's board or set up a youth advisory group
- Hold forums and interview children and their families to hear about key issues affecting them, including their perceptions of safety
- Engage children in the creation of your risk management strategies.

Ask children and young people to design policies that affect them
- Engage children to develop child-friendly Codes of Conduct that describe acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour

- Encourage children to create a child-friendly version of your Statement of Commitment to Child Safety[5]
- Involve children in the development of a Charter of Rights for Children and Young People.

Creating artwork supporting child safety
- Find ways to utilise community artwork, involving children to promote messages of child safety
- Create posters and postcards which build an awareness of abuse and give information on how to seek help
- Create posters that promote discussions of friends, listening, secrets, feelings, ideas, behaviour at church, bullying and who to talk to about problems.

Facilitate age-appropriate conversations about sex and abuse
- Educate children and young people about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour between adults and children
- Educate staff and volunteers on what, how and when it is appropriate to talk about sex
- Where appropriate, offer workshops on sex education and healthy relationships in partnership with a community organisation skilled in this area
- ensuring sexual and gender diversity is equally represented where possible
- Train young people in how to respond to disclosures from their peers.

Actively involve children and young people in worship
- Involve children and young people in worship. This will give them more confidence if they have to speak up about things that concern them. It will also help them know that the adults around them are listening.

How have faith-based organisations implemented this Standard?

Consulting children on their perceptions of safety

In 2019, the Salvation Army's youth and children's ministry teams ran a range of forums and interviews with children, youth and their families. The purpose was to hear about key issues affecting them and their peers. The teams wanted to understand the young people's perceptions of safety within the Salvation Army, how they connected with their faith, why they remained connected to it and what transformation meant and looked like to them. The project informed an ongoing agenda that ensured service activities and processes were responsive and proactive to the needs and desires of children. An ongoing dialogue with children has been established which is informing the development of the Salvation Army's Child Participation Framework.

Age-appropriate sex education and personal safety resources

The Safeguarding Office at Catholic Archdiocese of Perth have released 'Stories for Kids'[6], a ten-week online story time for children aged 4 - 10. The stories complement the 'Protecting God's Children' parent resource launched by the office in 2017. The parent resource includes ten 'basket fillers' that teach children age-appropriate information on sex education and personal safety.

Training young people for safe ministry

The Anglican Diocese of Sydney launched its Safe Ministry Junior Leaders course in November 2018. It was developed for leaders aged between 13 and 17 engaged in youth and children's ministry and has been carefully structured with age-appropriate language and content. A prerequisite of the course is for parents and the senior minister to authorise the junior leader's enrolment and for support systems to be in place in their local parish consisting of a training mentor while the course is being completed. The course has been transformative for many of the participants. Feedback is received from every participant as part of the course design and has been extremely positive.

Standard 3

Families and communities are informed and involved

Outcome

Organisations actively engage with families and communities to support children.

Safety challenges identified in the Royal Commission

The risk of abuse can increase when organisations are 'closed' or are not transparent with parents, carers and families about their processes, governance and behavioural expectations. This is particularly the case in situations where families and the community have an unquestioning respect for the authority of that organisation.

In the past, many families and communities had little awareness about child abuse. It was always seen as a problem that happened 'elsewhere'. They did not question their leaders or the decisions they made. As a result, not only were children groomed, but whole families and communities.

What are some of the barriers faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Differing views
- Lack of understanding of religious doctrines and practices can lead to negative attitudes from communities so they are reluctant to interact with some faith-based organisations
- Incompatible religious views make collaboration and partnerships difficult
- In some instances, children may attend a place of worship without parents or carers
- Interfaith families feel pressured to choose between faiths meaning they are not able to fully participate in all faith activities.

Lack of knowledge of child abuse
- Families and communities still have little awareness about child abuse
- Family members are not able to identify grooming, therefore they're still susceptible to being groomed
- Some community members still do not believe child abuse occurs in faith contexts

Families are less involved
- Families are busy and tend to be less involved in their child's activities
- Families use the children's program in places of worship as a babysitting service
- Language barriers make it difficult for families and community members to participate in all faith-based activities.

What should we be doing?

- Families have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their child and participate in decisions affecting them
- The organisation engages in open, two-way communication with families and communities about its child safety approach and relevant information is accessible
- Families and communities have a say in the organisation's policies and practices
- Families and communities are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Use social media to reach out to families and faith communities

- Send regular strong child safe messages via your online platforms

- Have a dedicated 'child protection' section on your website and social media, and in newsletters

- On your different platforms, provide links to information and resources so your community can learn more about keeping children safe.

Partnering with key community bodies

- Use other organisations' websites or forums to access and provide information on child safety

- Partner with other community organisations in events that focus on child safety.

Making everyone aware of safeguarding practices

- Use practical strategies to foster communication, such as giving information about your commitment to child safety and copies of your child safe policy and Codes of Conduct to any families joining your organisation

- Ensure families and the whole community knows the safeguarding person in your organisation and that they are the 'go to' person for child safety matters

- Have parents and carers sign a Code of Conduct when participating in your organisation

- Regularly remind families about what your organisation has in place to keep children safe such as your Codes of Conduct, policies and procedures, screening processes for adults working with children and the child safe training leaders undertake.

Keeping children safe during faith community events

- Create a risk management strategy for any event you hold

- Ensure children – and adults around children – are monitored at all times

- Inform parents and carers of their rights and responsibilities in supervising their children at events and services

- When organising family retreats, hold an information session on the first day where child safety is discussed and where families are invited to contribute or raise concerns.

How have faith-based organisations implemented this Standard?

Partnering with key community bodies to promote child safeguarding messages

The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies leads, speaks and advocates on behalf of the NSW Jewish community. Its website includes information about the actions taken by Jewish community leaders to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse. It states that it, 'strongly encourages all community organisations and members to play an active role in reinforcing the Jewish community's commitment to child protection, the establishment and maintenance of child safe institutions and signing onto the National Redress Scheme[7].'

Using social media to connect with your faith community

Videos can be an effective way of reaching people and overcoming literacy barriers. Some faith bodies include video messages from their leaders on their website or YouTube channel. For example, Hillsong's YouTube channel provides videos about a range of topics, including how volunteers who work with children are recruited and trained. The Presbyterian Church of Victoria's channel includes child safety training videos.

The Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines has been posting short videos on Facebook where priests and young leaders provide messages of wellbeing and online safety for families – especially while people are feeling isolated due to COVID-19.

Safe ministry awareness for faith communities

The Anglican Diocese of Sydney has developed Safe Ministry Blueprint practice and procedure documents which represent a holistic approach to safe ministry in churches. These documents are aimed at informing people across all levels of leadership and church engagement about child safety to help ensure greater awareness, transparency and accountability as well as helping to foster a culture of safe ministry within churches. Of particular relevance to Standard 3 is the Safe Ministry Blueprint for Parents and Church members which is designed to inform, help raise awareness and promote a culture of safe ministry for parents, church families and the broader community[8].

Standard 4

Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account

Outcome

Children are provided opportunities to participate to their full potential.

Safety challenges identified in the Royal Commission

Respecting diversity and promoting equity were issues for many organisations, including places of worship. Lack of equity created additional risks for children who were already more vulnerable to harm and abuse.

Many children from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds were forced to give up their culture and adopt religious beliefs imposed by others. Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were often preyed upon due to language barriers. Some children were vulnerable in other ways because they were questioning their sexuality or gender, or they had prior trauma (such as many refugees) or were experiencing adverse life events.

What are some of the barriers faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Accepted cultural norms

- What may be acceptable in a person's home country may be different to what is acceptable in Australia
- Discipline of children differs in different cultural groups
- Knowledge and skills are needed for people who challenge cultural norms.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

- Acknowledgment of inter-generational impact due to historic cultural destruction
- Organisations fail to recognise how cultural, educational or socio-economic issues may impact engagement in activities or other aspects of the faith community.

LGBTIQ+

- Some people in faith-based organisations do not accept sexuality and gender diversity
- LGBTIQ+ people who are religious can be deeply impacted by lack of acceptance
- Organisations that want to invite LGBTIQ+ people into their community lack awareness and skills.

Disability

- Some older buildings do not accommodate those needing mobility assistance
- Inadequate awareness of 'hidden disabilities' such as autism and mental health issues
- Limited training and resources for meaningful inclusion, even where there is awareness and intention
- Discussion of 'healing' can have a negative impact on people with disability.

What should we be doing?

- The organisation actively anticipates children's diverse circumstances and responds effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities
- All children have access to information, support and complaint processes
- The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability and children from CALD backgrounds.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Culturally safe organisations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

- Develop and implement a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- Display resources such as posters that show respect for Aboriginal culture
- Celebrate events to highlight Aboriginal culture and history. For example: National Apology Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week
- Find out about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional owner groups in your local area and seek their involvement
- Embed community consultation processes with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups, leaders and service providers into your program for ongoing service improvement.

Creating safe environments for children from CALD backgrounds

- Translate your statement of commitment to child safety into easy English and community languages
- Publish a Statement of Commitment to Diversity and ensure everyone knows discrimination will not be tolerated
- Host 'welcome events' which celebrate diversity and significant cultural festivals

- Ensure your faith body's physical environment contains positive images of a range of cultures
- Provide children, their carers with easy access to professional interpreters, where required, especially during a complaints process
- Consider delivering parenting courses and programs for parents and carers that address cultural and intergenerational issues.

Children and young people with disability

- Seek direct input from children with disability about the design and delivery of your services and the best processes to adopt to encourage them to speak up about concerns.

Supporting LGBTIQ+ young people

- Write a statement of welcome and support for LGBTIQ+ members – where possible involve your existing LGBTIQ+ members in drafting this
- Consider signing up to the Welcome Here Project[9]
- Contact LGBTIQ+ community organisations to build relationships and look for opportunities to work together
- Consider LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Practice training.

How have faith-based organisations implemented this Standard?

Re-Issuing a Declaration – 'We are a multi-cultural Church'

In 2015, the Uniting Church celebrated the 30th anniversary of the statement adopted by the 4th Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia that, 'We are a multi-cultural Church.' The church republished it on its website and created a downloadable poster to be displayed in church buildings. The declaration emphasises the importance of allowing for the full participation of children and adults from Aboriginal, and other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, in church decision making processes. It also supports equitable rights for people in Uniting Church properties and offers access to its resources.

Supporting churches as they welcome children with additional needs

Baptist Children and Families Ministries hosted a workshop presented by a professional educator and then published a guide to show churches how to set up a buddy program to assist children with autism[10].

Partnering with community organisations

Equal Voices is an alliance of LGBTIQ+ Christians and allies. It is a grassroots initiative that encourages congregations and individuals to sign an apology to LGBTIQ+ friends and to all who have been adversely affected by the teachings and behaviour of Christians and their churches and pledge for future change, supported by religious leaders[11].

> " The Uniting Church in Australia believes that all people, including children, are made in the image of God. As a Christian community we believe that God reaches out to us in love and acceptance, and that our relationships with each other should express love, care and respect. "
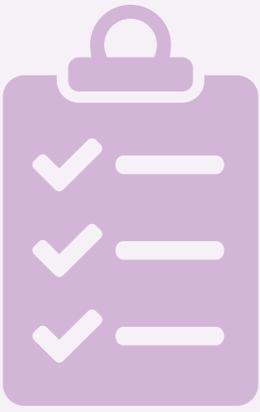
Standard 5

People working with children are suitable and supported

Outcome

Organisations attract, recruit, supervise and support staff to keep children safe.

Safety challenges identified in the Royal Commission

Some faiths did not have any screening processes for spiritual leaders. In other cases where they existed, they weren't fit for purpose. Volunteers often occupied positions without any formal recruitment process.

Imagine Nations Church, Penrith

What are some of the barriers faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Volunteers

- Volunteers can be hard to find, especially in smaller communities
- Volunteers can be offended when asked to undergo a recruitment process, including being asked to obtain a WWCC
- Refusing a potential volunteer leads to the faith community assuming the worst about their history
- Limited resources can mean that volunteers are insufficiently supported
- Putting extra demands on volunteers such as training may lead to reduction in volunteer numbers
- Fear of risk can lead to a decline in volunteering.

Leaders

- Different faiths have varying ways of recruiting leaders. Some go through formal training, whilst others are nominated by their community
- Limited skill sets of leaders to maintain oversight of workers (including volunteers). Sometimes this oversight is delegated to other volunteers
- Limited resources to support recruitment and induction procedures
- Limited accountability of leaders when recruiting for child-related roles
- Some leaders especially those who are newly arrived to Australia have a limited knowledge of Australian regulations aimed to prevent child protection, domestic violence etc.

> **Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."**
>
> Matthew 19:14, The Bible

What should we be doing?

- Recruitment, including advertising and screening, emphasises child safety
- Relevant staff have probity checks
- All staff receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their child safety responsibilities, including reporting obligations
- Supervision and people management roles have a child safety focus.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Recruiting staff and volunteers

- Have a child-focused volunteer policy that outlines the recruitment process for both paid staff and volunteers (including job descriptions, interview processes and referee checks)

- Have dedicated physical and online spaces for volunteers that promote child safe messages

- Ensure all staff and volunteers in leadership and child-related work have a verified Working with Children Check[12]. Find out more on your responsibilities to the NSW Working With Children Check here

- Ensure your recruitment policy outlines how conflict of interest will be managed for people responsible for verifying probity checks.

Induction

- Have a scheduled induction program that familiarises staff with relevant policies, gives formal child safe education and offers other relevant 'on the job training' so they are equipped to work with children.

Ongoing training

- Regular mandatory reporting and child safe training

- Professional supervision with a child safety focus for senior pastoral staff

- Leaders regularly meet to discuss child safe issues and to offer peer support to each other.

Presbyterian Church of NSW/ACT

How have faith-based organisations implemented this Standard?

Communicating child safety in job ads

The Australian Jesuits have developed a comprehensive recruitment and registration policy which commits to engaging suitable volunteers in a fair, lawful and consistent manner, with child safety reinforced at every stage of the process. The policy requires all roles advertised internally and externally to include a statement saying that, 'The Ministry is committed to protecting all children and young people from harm. We require all applicants to undergo an extensive screening process prior to engagement.'

Effective recruitment processes

Jericho Road is the social justice arm of the Presbyterian Church NSW/ACT and is responsible for safeguarding children. It has free resources to support child safe environments, including detailed information on the recruitment of volunteers. It has a recruitment procedure template as well as supporting documents such as sample job descriptions, an application to work with children form and other resources that support child safe recruitment processes[13].

Training for staff

Lay workers at the Uniting Church's Queensland Synod are supported by B.C.A.L.M - a simple guide for immediate action if they become aware, or receive a report, of inappropriate behaviour of child abuse or neglect:

- **B**reathe using a quick calming breath to help engage your thinking brain. If working with someone else who has become upset, suggest they 'take a deep breath' and count for them as they breathe in and out a few times
- **C**alm the person. The words you use will have a profound and lasting impact. Say things like, 'You've done the right thing by telling me', 'I'm glad you told me', 'I believe you' and 'It wasn't your fault'

- **A**ssess whether there is any immediate danger. If there is, or if in doubt, call 000 and ask for police to attend
- **L**et the person know what your obligations are. Explain you have a responsibility to report child abuse concerns and allegations. You can use words like 'I'll need to tell someone about this so I can get you some help. I'm going to have to make a report'
- **M**ake a report immediately. Note your concerns and report them to your ministry agent straight away, respecting the privacy and dignity of all parties[14].

Standard 6

Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse (or other concerns) are child-focused

Outcome

Children are the priority when responding to complaints of abuse.

Safety challenges identified in the Royal Commission

Within faith-based organisations, child sexual abuse was viewed as a forgivable sin or a moral failing rather than a crime. This contributed to inadequate institutional responses. For example, abuse was seen as a 'one-off' incident, rather than ongoing behaviour. Further, people in leadership positions were not given training in relation to the prevention, identification and appropriate response to child sexual abuse.

What are some of the barriers faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Poor response to raising past concerns
- Those who raised concerns were not always given a welcome response in the past
- Pastoral concern for the perpetrator may lead to perceived conflicts of interest when addressing complaints
- Failure to follow up and deal properly with past allegations of abuse
- Not having appropriate and trauma-informed complaint handling procedures in place
- Sexually and gender diverse people may be fearful of disclosing abuse from an adult of the same gender feeling that will be judged or blamed.

Limited prior engagement with authorities
- Not knowing which authority or agency to contact to report concerns
- Distrust of state authorities from past experience or reluctance to engage on religious grounds feeling transgressions are 'sins' and not 'crimes'.

Lack of professional standards expertise
- Inability to source or resource appropriately trained personnel or consultants to assist in handling complaints
- Fear of legal or reputational consequences should there be any missteps in responding to abuse.

Impact of small communities
- Conflict of interest
- Small communities may make it difficult to make a complaint and maintain anonymity.

> **The Anglican Diocese is strongly committed to learning from the past. The Archbishop acknowledges the courage of survivors and others for speaking out – often at great personal cost to themselves, especially when they were not believed. This courage has helped the Diocese to make changes that will help keep children in its care safe in the future.**
>
> Rev Dr Glenn Davies, Archbishop of Anglican Diocese of Sydney

What should we be doing?

- The organisation has a child-focused complaint handling system that is understood by children, staff, volunteers and families
- The organisation has an effective complaint handling policy that clearly outlines roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, and obligations to act and report
- Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly
- The organisation meets reporting, privacy and employment obligations.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Communicating your complaints process

- Ensure your complaints process is accessible and age-appropriate
- Provide information about complaints in a variety of forms e.g. posters, videos or in newsletters
- Include a feedback link on your website and email signature.

Have child friendly ways to make a complaint

- Consult children and young people in the ways they would feel most comfortable if they had to make a complaint
- Facilitate opportunities for verbal complaints as well as written ones. For example, have someone in a safeguarding role who children know they can go to about anything that concerns them
- Keep up-to-date with how children use technology to find new ways children can make a complaint
- Have a child friendly version of your reporting policy.

Promote a culture that encourages feedback, including making complaints

- Ensure staff and volunteers know about the Whistle Blower protection in the *Children's Guardian Act 2019*[15].

How have faith-based organisations implemented this Standard?

The National Office of Child Safety – Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people

The National Office of Child Safety commissioned the NSW Ombudsman to create the Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people[16]. The NSW Ombudsman developed the Guide through a national consultation process involving the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission and Children's Guardians (including the NSW Children's Guardian), Commissioners and Ombudsman's offices across Australia. The Guide provides practical advice to organisations about how to develop, implement and maintain a complaint-handling system that prioritises child safety and promotes the rights of children and young people to have a voice in decisions that affect them. Many faith-related organisations have consulted this document and adopted its advice.

Developing protocols to respond to complaints

The Australian Brigidine Sisters' Congregational Leadership Team established a Safeguarding Reference Group with the objective of providing expert advice on policies, education and complaint management. Membership of the group includes external persons.

The Leadership Team have developed Complaint Framework and Response Protocol tools to support the Safeguarding Reference Group guiding the leadership team when responding to complaints of abuse involving children or vulnerable people. The Response Protocol includes allocating a suitable person to be the point of contact for the congregation for anyone reporting abuse or requesting support services. Both documents are available on the organisation's website.

Complaints and allegations are taken seriously

The Anglican Diocese of Grafton maintains a range of documents on their website including 'Faithfulness in Service' which sets out what is expected of church workers in terms of conduct, how to make a report and how reports of misconduct will be addressed. Staff are provided this document upon induction and the church community is reminded of it through newsletters and other updates.

In the case of an allegation, the Director of Professional Standards is the single point of contact for reporting concerns for the safety of children and allegations of sexual misconduct or abuse. Allegations can be made via a 24/7 hotline and an email address specifically for reporting. Where there is an allegation of misconduct the Director meets with the complainant to talk more, explain the process, arrange counselling if wanted and for the complainant to have a local support person. The Director also reports the allegation to a Diocesan Professional Standards Committee which approves arrangements for any necessary investigation.

Standard 7

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

Outcome

Organisations invest in building staff skills, abilities and confidence.

Safety challenges identified in the Royal Commission

Many faith-based organisations relied on untrained staff and volunteers to take on leadership and child-related roles. There was no training on child protection or how to handle allegations of abuse and no professional supervision of leaders or volunteers. They were rarely given information on the importance of supervision when adults were interacting with children.

What are some of the barriers faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Ability to attend training
- Not being able to get to a training facility
- No access to technology
- Cost of training
- Not seeing the value of training.

Safeguarding is not what leaders 'signed up for'
- Older leaders were trained in religious practices and not safeguarding
- Leaders may belong to other professions such as teaching or medicine and insist that they don't need any further training
- Volunteers may be discouraged from starting or continuing in leadership positions because of the additional time commitments of training.

Maintaining training systems
- Inadequate monitoring and maintenance of training records to ensure training renewals are undertaken
- Neglecting to update training materials and resources in a continually evolving child protection landscape.

What should we be doing?

- Staff receive training on child maltreatment, particularly abuse that occurs in organisations (including how to prevent it, identify it and respond to it)
- Staff receive training on the organisation's child safe practices and child protection strategies
- Staff are supported to develop practical skills in protecting children and responding to disclosures.

> **It's God that provides for everyone. Why is there any need to be afraid? '...everything is managed by the supreme divine power of the Creator who looks after even the young of flamingos who have been left behind.**
>
> Raag Goojaree Mehalaa, 5 from the Gurugranth Sahib Ji (Sikh scripture).

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Be proactive in developing your child safety knowledge

- Sign up to newsletters and websites to build your awareness of child safety
- Seek out mentors, both individuals and larger organisations with strong child safe initiatives
- Join an existing safeguarding network or start your own
- Keep up-to-date with legislative changes.

Seek external expertise

- Engage an external expert to work with your organisation to deliver training that is appropriate for your needs
- Invite survivor advocacy groups to have input into and provide feedback on your child safe training.

The development of training content

- Include survivor stories to build empathy and understanding with the mainstream congregation
- Role play to help participants develop practical skills such as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse

- Find ways to include the voices and perspectives of children and young people
- Develop a simple flow-chart of instructions to support staff and volunteers to appropriately respond to child abuse
- Consider multi-modal training where different forms of delivery (face-to-face, electronic, printed) are used to ensure the diverse needs of different learners are supported.

Other considerations for training

- Consider language and cultural issues when planning training
- Child safe training content may be confronting and trigger various emotions. Have support measures in place
- Keep a training register that includes dates, names of participants and when training content should be reviewed
- Ask for feedback from participants about the quality and usefulness of the training.


How have faith-based organisations implemented this Standard?

Safe Church Awareness workshops

The Safe Church Program from the National Council of Churches Australia produces Safe Church Awareness training workshops and workbooks across Australia. These workshops are a starting point for churches to run safeguarding awareness training.

Training volunteers

Australian Christian Churches launched a Safer Churches Volunteer Workshop for church volunteers. By the end of 2019, over 1,800 ACC volunteers had attended it and it is now mandatory for all volunteers[17].
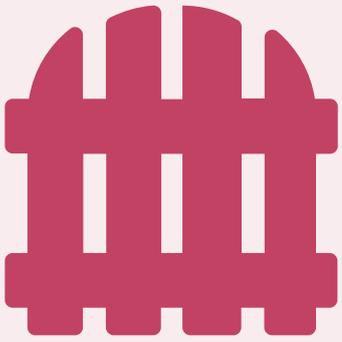
Standard 8

Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse or other kinds of harm to occur

Outcome

Risks to children in physical and online environments are identified and minimised.

Safety challenges identified in the Royal Commission

Often families allowed their children to be alone with staff without supervision due to the trust they placed in their places of worship. Child abuse occurred when the physical environment created opportunities for an adult to isolate a child without supervision or scrutiny. Often organisations lacked policies that addressed and minimised risks. Opportunities arose in secluded or unsupervised areas, situations where children lived away from their parents or times when children travelled with a person in a bus or car or on overnight trips.

What are some of the barriers faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Risk assessments

- Not knowing how to complete a Child Safe Risk Assessment
- Lack of understanding about online risks including communicating with people online.

The physical environment

- Poor natural lines of sight in the physical environment
- Availability of adequate supervision
- Physical spaces and designs of buildings used by faith organisations may be less than ideal (or be plainly unsuitable) for particular ministry activities, for example, there may be rooms where the layout makes appropriate supervision difficult or impossible, or where there are outdated facilities containing safety hazards
- Off-site excursions and overnight camps usually present higher risks and can be burdensome to organise with child safety in mind.

The online environment

- Leaders, staff and volunteers are not aware of online dangers to young people
- Codes of Conduct fail to describe how adults are able to interact with children online, such as by public Facebook posts but not private messages
- Children are unsupervised when accessing the internet on the faith-based organisation's premises.

What should we be doing?

- Risks in online and physical environments are identified and mitigated without compromising a child's right to privacy and healthy development
- The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and relevant policies
- Physical spaces allow for appropriate supervision of adults working with children.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Setting clear guidelines

- Ensure the Code of Conduct outlines conduct for both the physical and online environments
- Risk Assessments are carried out for all physical and online activities
- Start and finish times for activities are communicated clearly
- There is a registration process including permission notes and a description of activities that parents and carers should complete before their child can attend particular groups such as Sunday school, camps etc.
- Children are not allowed to be unattended before or after worship or activities
- Parents and carers understand the rules for their child participating in activities.

Applying a Situational Prevention approach

- All activities for children and young people should be observable and interruptible
- Whether physically or online, adults are not alone with a child
- Staff can 'drop in' to monitor interactions between adults and children
- Doors are left open where possible, windows are unobstructed, unused spaces are locked
- Supervisors should have login details to be able to 'drop into' online environments
- Online sessions are ended so children aren't left unattended and able to access social media etc.

Offsite activities

- Risk management strategies are established for transportation to or from events, overnight camps, if staff or volunteers provide tutoring or coaching and if staff attend private functions for children who are part of the faith community
- Policies and procedures describe how adults are able to interact with children in offsite activities, and are offered training to ensure they understand their responsibilities.

Risk management for Persons of Concern (PoC)

- Organisations have a clear policy on how they manage known perpetrators and people under investigation for child abuse
- Engage PoC in a contract that outlines the conditions of them attending religious services, including what they can and cannot do
- PoC should not be in child related roles (as per statutory obligations)
- PoC should be monitored at all times
- Where possible, PoC should attend services with no or few children present.

> **In the practice of the Dharma, I hold the student-teacher relationship to be a sacred connection which prioritises the spiritual development, maturation, and well-being of the student.**
>
> Australian Sangha Association, allianceforbuddhistethics.com

How have faith-based organisations implemented this Standard?

Providing adequate supervision for children

Hillsong Church requires all its programs and activities for children to be supervised by at least two appropriately screened, approved adult leaders. Leaders are identified by wearing a name sticker printed from an electronic check-in system. Where children need to use the toilet during activities, two approved adult leaders must check that the facilities are vacant of adults before children enter, then stand outside and prevent adults from entering until the children have exited. Leaders must ensure that every child is picked up safely at the conclusion of the activity by a parent or carer[18].

Online safety

The Board of Jewish Education (BJE) recently began offering scripture classes online in response to Covid-19. The Department of Education issued guidelines and resources to help BJE deliver safe online classes. Prior to the classes, the BJE

- conducted a risk assessment
- updated their Code of Conduct to include expectations for online interactions between staff and children
- developed an online policy and ensured their staff knew the guidelines
- sent information to parents outlining how classes would work.
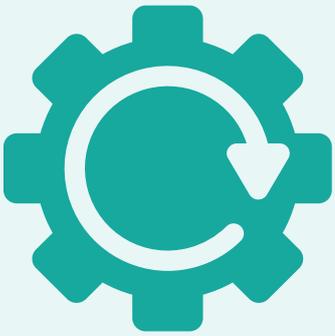
Standard 9

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved

Outcome

Organisations continuously improve their child safe practices.

Safety challenges identified in the Royal Commission

Many faith-based organisations lacked processes that monitored quality improvement. There was little evidence of systems that monitored responses to incidents and ways to reduce incidents occurring in the future.

What are some of the barriers faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Regional communities
- Don't have access to experts as easily as metropolitan communities
- Geographical isolation may prevent outside scrutiny of day-to-day operations.

Cultural barriers
- Some cultures consider it rude to question decision-makers
- Being unwilling to criticise can limit the provision of feedback.

Lack of resources
- Some ideas for improvement cost money
- Developing systems etc. requires skills, time and commitment
- Smaller organisations with a control oversight body may defer responsibility to it
- Reliance on volunteers with little time and few available resources.

Competing priorities
- Community outreach, service delivery or other core activities may consume time and energy
- Diverting attention from the day-to-day running of the organisation may be costly.

What should we be doing?

- The organisation regularly reviews and improves child safe practices
- The organisation analyses complaints to identify causes and systemic failures and inform continuous improvement.

"

One aspect of being a healthy church is to place a high priority on ensuring that our churches and their ministry activities are safe places – physically, spiritually and emotionally. This is a foundational part of our missional purpose to demonstrate the love of Jesus to all people. We know that Jesus greatly valued children and young people and he consistently demonstrated great concern for the vulnerable.

Rev Dr Steve Bartlett, Director of Ministries, Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT

"

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Establishing quality improvement practices

- Nominate an individual who is responsible for ensuring that your faith body regularly reviews (at least annually) its child safe policies, procedures and practices and after critical incidents

- Establish a safeguarding panel or professional standards committee with external experts to give advice on your policies, procedures and training

- Make sure you benchmark your practices against information produced by regulators and oversight bodies in NSW and elsewhere, for example, self-assessment tools, and seek their views about where your faith body can improve.

Sharing knowledge

- Engage with other faith communities and survivor advocacy groups to share knowledge, experience and good practice ideas

- Be a safeguarding mentor or seek one out

- Seek out resources and examples of other faith's continuous improvement activities

- Ask families, staff, volunteers and children for feedback about their experience of how your faith body dealt with them in relation to a complaint, or their views more generally about your child safe practices, and how this work is communicated – and then act on this feedback where necessary.

> **Children are the most precious treasure a community can possess, for in them are the promise and guarantee of the future.**
>
> **They bear the seeds of the character of future society which is largely shaped by what the adults constituting the community do or fail to do with respect to children.**
>
> **They are a trust no community can neglect with impunity.**
>
> Universal House of Justice (The Ridvan Message, 2000)

How have faith-based organisations implemented this Standard?

Establishing professional standards and/or safeguarding panels

The Australian Jesuits have established a Professional Standards Consultative Panel to advise the Province on best practice approaches to child safety, redress and ongoing support for survivors of abuse and, where needed, the removal of Jesuits from ministry. The five-member panel is made up of professionals with experience in a range of areas including safeguarding and supporting young people, understanding and preventing sexual violence and abuse, psychology, and risk assessment.

Transparency and accountability

The Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay create and submit Annual Safeguarding Reports to the Bishop for oversight. The reports include:

- Child Related Activity Parish Register Audit Report (biannual)
- Parish Visit Safeguarding Report
- Screening Report
- Training Report
- Redress Compliance Report
- Visiting Clergy Audit Report (Biannual).

Safe Church Health Check

Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT have developed a resource which allows churches to submit their policies and procedures for external review and feedback. The Safe Church Health Check is structured according to the Child Safe Standards and provides a way for churches to ensure that all relevant legal responsibilities are addressed.

Standard 10

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

Outcome

Policies and procedures are championed by leaders, localised, understood by staff and clearly communicated.

Safety challenges identified in the Royal Commission

Faith-based organisations failed to protect children when policies and procedures were absent, not applied, or were felt to be not relevant to the organisation and its environment.

What are some of the barriers faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Ineffective policies

- Don't know how to develop policies
- Adopting policies and procedures from other organisations without contextualisation
- Policies lack sufficient detail or are overly complex
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds may find technical language and terminology difficult to understand.

Responsibility and accountability

- Having responsibility for policies and procedures without authority to enforce internal compliance
- Policies not known or not properly disseminated throughout the organisation
- Inadequate systems to ensure leaders and staff are accountable for breaches.

Practice of knowledge

- Training needs to be provided to staff on how policies work and that they should be 'lived' documents and not just sit on a shelf
- Not being able to identify and detect when policies are not working and why
- Not knowing who to go to for help with applying policies in difficult circumstances
- Lack of experience in implementing and sustaining efforts in child safety.

> " In the family, which is a community of persons, special attention must be devoted to the children by developing a profound esteem for their personal dignity, and a great respect and generous concern for their rights. "
>
> Apostolic Exhortation, Familiaris Consortio of Pope John Paul II

What should we be doing?

- Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards
- Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand
- Best practice models and stakeholder consultation inform the development of policies and procedures
- Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures
- Staff understand and implement the policies and procedures.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Ensure policies are up to date and relevant

- Have your existing policies and procedures regularly audited by an external expert to ensure they comply with the child safe standards, reflect current best practice and incorporate stakeholder feedback
- Regularly ask different people within your faith community (e.g. staff, volunteers, children, parents, speakers of languages other than English) whether they find your policies and procedures accessible and easy to understand.

Make policies accessible

- Consolidate all child safety policies and procedures into one overarching 'framework' so that they are easy to locate

- Make them available to as many different audiences via as many different methods as possible (e.g. on your website, on notice boards, in welcome/induction packs).

Policies into practice

- Make sure people know who to contact in your faith body if they have questions about your child safe policies and procedures
- Regularly survey staff and volunteers about child safe policies and procedures to identify any gaps in knowledge and target training and support
- Pro-actively identify a variety of opportunities for leaders to regularly communicate consistent messages to your faith community about the importance of safeguarding children and the organisation's approach to this.

" We want the kids to know they are loved by God and loved by us. Kids have a lot to say, and it's really important for us to listen to them when they talk so they know that their thoughts are valued.

We want to help raise a generation of kids who feel listened to and loved, and who show that to others.

M. Hawkins, Sunday School teacher at
NSW Presbyterian Church.

"

How have faith-based organisations implemented this Standard?

Reviewing and implementing policies

The Baha'i community regularly review child safe policies and procedures. A recent review of their Child Protection policy focused on how accessible it was which resulted in a change of format and language used to ensure it would be better understood by everyone. Training was provided by their Child Safety Officers so everyone knew about the changes and what was expected of them.

Packaging policies and procedures

Baptists Churches of NSW & ACT have developed a 'Safe Church Package[19]'. It provides procedures for churches to follow such as a Code of Conduct and Safe Church Policy as well as other helpful resources which are freely available for any church to adapt to their own context. Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT have also developed a Safe Church Health Check[20] which provides an independent review of an individual church's implementation of the Child Safe Standards.

Useful contacts and links for faith bodies

Oversight and regulatory bodies:

Office of the Children's Guardian:
https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/

Its website has links to free training and includes a range of child safe resources, fact sheets and templates.

National Office for Child Safety:
https://pmc.gov.au/domestic-policy/national-office-child-safety

Publishes a range of resources on their website, including:

- Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people – practical advice for organisations about how to develop, implement and maintain a complaint-handling system that prioritises child safety and promotes the rights of children and young people to have a voice in decisions that affect them.
- Annual reports by several major faith-based organisations on the progress they have made in responding to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Children's Commissioner:
https://www.humanrights.gov.au/

The AHRC website has a dedicated page for the National Principles and links to useful resources and training.

eSafety Commissioner:
https://www.esafety.gov.au/

Its website includes a range of helpful resources for parents, teachers for use in classrooms, advice on how to report different forms of abuse (including cyber-bullying), and it translates information into several languages.

Western Australia Commissioner for Children and Young People: https://www.ccyp.wa.gov.au/

Victorian Commission for Children and Young People:
https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/

Theses websites includes useful resources to help organisations be child safe, including specific guidance for faith communities.

Faith Bodies:

Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney Safe Ministry:
https://safeministry.org.au/

Website provides detailed information about the Safe Ministry work and initiatives of the Diocese's Professional Standards Unit and includes policy and procedure documents, resources, and articles. It also has a dedicated website for Safe Ministry training. The Safe Ministry Blueprint documents represent a holistic approach to safe ministry, and contain information for people across all levels of leadership and church engagement to grow awareness, transparency and accountability.

Australian Jesuit Province:
https://jesuit.org.au/professional-standards/safeguarding-children/

The Australian Jesuit Province is working in partnership with the Australian Childhood Foundation in implementing best-practice policies and standards to protect the children and vulnerable adults in their care. Website includes information about the Province's Professional Standards Consultative Panel and links to safeguarding policies and templates.

Baptist Churches of NSW and Act –
Creating Safe Spaces and Safe Church Health Check:
https://creatingsafespaces.org.au/schc/

Creating Safe Spaces is an online and face-to-face training program which seeks to ensure safe ministry policy and practice to protect children and all vulnerable people from harm and abuse. The Safe Church Health Check Package includes model policies and procedures and other useful templates.

Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office:
https://www.sydneycatholic.org

Promotes collective responsibility to protect the safety, wellbeing and dignity of children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Archdiocese and to respond swiftly and compassionately in circumstances in which children are harmed or at risk of being harmed. Website includes a range of information and practical resources, including guidelines and factsheets, and resources designed and developed by and for children and young people.

Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay:
https://www.bbcatholic.org.au/

The Diocesan Office for Safeguarding includes three separate offices of safeguarding for the Chancery; Catholic Schools Office, and CatholicCare. Each office is responsible for raising awareness and providing education on best practice to highlight its shared responsibility for the protection and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and complying with child protection laws. Website has a dedicated page for the Safeguarding Office's work and activities, and includes links to its training and education, policies, resources and research.

Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Office of Safeguarding: https://officeofsafeguarding.org.au/

Oversees the safeguarding of all children and vulnerable adults who participate in the life of the Diocese as part of faith communities in parishes, diocesan systemic schools and early education centres, welfare and community services, out-of-school hours care, and other diocesan ministries. Website provides detailed information, guidance and resources for adults and children, staff and survivors.

Catholic Diocese of Parramatta:
https://parracatholic.org/

The Safeguarding Office delivers services under the following core functions for each agency and ministry of the Diocese of Parramatta: Prevention and education; Outreach/Healing and Support Services; Compliance; Investigations; Partnership/Collaboration; Research; and Legal/litigation, and is accountable to the Bishop and Trustees. Website has a dedicated page for the Safeguarding Office's work and activities, and includes links to its training courses, policies, codes of conduct and resources.

Catholic Diocese of Wollongong:
https://www.dow.org.au/directory/safeguarding/

The Office of Professional Standards and Safeguarding (OPSS) is part of the Office of the Bishop and is focused on the development and maintenance of a safe institutional culture for both children and adults across all its sectors, services and activities. Website has a dedicated page for the Safeguarding Office's work and activities, and includes links to its training and education, conferences/forums, safeguarding news and statements, and resources and information.

Catholic Professional Standards Limited:
https://www.cpsltd.org.au/

Established by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia but operating independently of the Church, CPSL sets safeguarding standards, provides child safety training and support, and audits and publicly reports on the compliance of Catholic entities, organisations & ministries in accordance with safeguarding standards. CPSL board directors are lay people with professional expertise in the fields of law, education, human services, safeguarding and regulation.

Catholic Religious Australia:
https://www.catholicreligious.org.au/

Peak body for Catholic Leaders of Religious Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life in Australia. Website includes information about safeguarding and copies of CRA's National Day of Sorrow and Promise Statement and Liturgy Booklet.

Ecumenical Council of NSW:
https://www.nswec.org.au/

A fellowship of Christian and Orthodox churches in NSW and the ACT that works together on specific initiatives and projects concerning the churches and the needs of the wider community. The Ecumenical Council includes an inter-faith commission as one of its charters.

Hillsong Safe Church Framework:
https://hillsong.com/australia/safechurch/

Provides an explanation of Hillsong Church's approach to protecting children and other vulnerable people and the overarching governance arrangements to achieve its safety objectives. Includes detailed information about the elements of the Safe Church Framework Model.

National Council of Churches in Australia:
https://www.ncca.org.au/

Ecumenical organisation bringing together a number of Australia's Christian churches in dialogue and practical cooperation. The NCCA runs the Safe Churches Program, which facilitates Safe Church training workshops for local church and congregation leaders, and provides a range of practical online child safe resources for faith organisations, including guidelines, factsheets and templates.

NSW Jewish Board of Deputies:
https://www.nswjbd.org/

Representative organisation for the Jewish community of NSW. Website profiles the work of the Board's Taskforce on Child Protection and participation on the Executive Council of Australian Jewry's National Working Group on Child Protection.

Presbyterian Church in NSW:
https://jerichoroad.org.au/

Jericho Road works with and for the Presbyterian Church in NSW to provide individuals, congregations, presbyteries, organisations, and committees with training, support, advice and resources in relation to safe ministry and abuse matters. A range of resources are available on the Jericho Road website, including sample duty statements for roles expected to work with children. Breaking the Silence is the response of the Presbyterian Church of NSW to the abuse of children in the church. Website includes detailed information and guidance, policy documents, practical resources and links.

The Salvation Army:
https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/about-us/ governance-policy/safeguarding-children-and-young- people/

The Salvation Army's website includes information about its safeguarding team, framework and resources, including information for children, young people and parents.

Uniting Church in Australia:
https://www.uniting.org/community-impact/child- wellbeing

The Uniting Church's approach to safeguarding children is set out in its National Child Safety Policy Framework. The Church has also established the role of Children's Advocate to facilitate greater participation by children, their families and communities, in the planning of Uniting services.

If you would like your faith-organisation's child safe advocacy unit added to this list in future editions of this guide, please contact childsafe@kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au

Endnotes

1. https://www.blueknot.org.au/; https://www.samsn.org.au/

2. https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/about-us/news/guide-for-engaging-sensitively-with-abuse-survivors-now-available

3. This may only be appropriate for organisations who can properly support survivors of abuse with skilled staff.

4. Lina's Project http://www.linasproject.com.au/

5. https://www.unicef.org.au/Upload/UNICEF/Media/Our%20work/childfriendlycrc.pdf

6. https://cathnews.com/cathnews/37856-online-story-time-teaches-kids-personal-safety

7. https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/

8. https://safeministry.org.au/blueprints/

9. https://www.welcomehere.org.au/

10. https://baptistcfm.org.au/children-and-families-at-church/children-with-special-needs/

11. https://equalvoices.org.au/

12. https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check/employer/role-of-an-employer

13. www.breakingthesilence.org.au

14. Uniting Church in Australia, Annual progress report on response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 2019, p10. https://www.childabuseroyalcommissionresponse.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-12/Uniting%20Church%20in%20Australia%20Annual%20Progress%20Report%20Nov%202019.pdf

15. https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2019/25/full

16. https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/nocs-complaint-handling-guide.pdf

17. Australian Christian Churches, Annual progress report on response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 2019, pp3-4. https://www.childabuseroyalcommissionresponse.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-12/Australian%20Christian%20Churches%20-%20Annual%20Progress%20Report.pdf

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