

Diocese of Nelson Policy to Protect Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

A. Policy Statement

We are committed to providing safe ministry to everyone within our care, whether church members or those receiving ministry from the church. We have particular responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults who must be protected from all forms of abuse and inappropriate conduct.

Our Diocese is committed to implementing the SafeHere (safe ministry) programme for all who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, paid or unpaid. (The various roles under SafeHere are defined in Schedule A.) We are also committed to additional safety measures in the appointment of licensed clergy and for the training of those acting under a ministry licence to the Bishop, clergy or lay.

Purpose

This policy seeks to ensure that all who provide ministry or act on behalf of a parish or the Diocese of Nelson, lay or ordained, are safe people to be entrusted with this responsibility. This is both a legal requirement and our responsibility as loving Christian communities. We seek to do this by ensuring that:

- Various safety checks are undertaken prior to a person's involvement in ministry to children, young people or vulnerable adults, or appointment to paid parish or diocesan positions that may involve dealing with these groups of vulnerable people.
- SafeHere training is undertaken by all who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, so those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults know how to minister safely, recognise signs of abuse or neglect and know how to disclose such matters.
- All activities /ministries are based on a safe, risk-managed programme that ensures a safe environment.

We acknowledge that some behaviours can be repented of and need not affect involvement in ministry if the repentance is profound and lasting. However, extra care must be taken where there is a risk of sexual abuse and some behaviours can never safely be presumed to be a thing of the past.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- everyone (paid or unpaid, clergy or lay) who undertakes ministry with children, young people or vulnerable adults, and
- those who in the course of their paid employment with the church may have to interact with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Those under 18 years of age

Those aged under 18 cannot be a full SafeHere team member but can participate in ministry as a junior team member, always under supervision. As junior team members they are covered by this policy.

Helpers

It is understood that for practical reasons it will be necessary from time to time to have help from other people to fill in for absentees at late notice, or to provide extra assistance on a busy day (eg, in a crèche). Such helpers must work in the presence, or under the direct supervision of, at least one other person who has received appropriate safety checks and training.

However, if such people become regular helpers for any activity, and/or their task involves them being unsupervised for any period of time, the relevant safety check procedures and training must be followed.

Guest ministry

Just as a teacher must stay in a classroom when a visitor is present, so must a team leader or team member stay with a visiting worker. As the guest will be working in the presence or under the direct supervision of someone who has received appropriate safety checks and training, they will not be expected to have undergone a safety check or training.

However, we recommend that before inviting a guest:

- their suitability is checked by obtaining a reference from someone who can attest to their relevant character and skills
- evidence is obtained of appropriate qualifications, eg first aid certificate or instructors qualification. This is crucial for activities involving a moderate to high degree of risk.
- an invitation is issued and once accepted, a meeting (in person, if possible) takes place to clarify expectations.

B. People Safety Checks

Safety Check Requirements

All aspects of the Safety Check must be completed before a person begins ministry or relevant paid employment. Keep a secure record of the safety check in a separate file for each applicant.

Safety Check for Volunteers

We recommend that a volunteer spends at least six months attending a church before applying for any leadership or ministry role.

All volunteer applicants for ministry with children, young persons or vulnerable adults must undergo a safety check that includes:

1. Identity verification. (This will happen when the applicant applies for a police vet. The Vicar/Priest in Charge must see at least two pieces of identification, one of which is photographic identification, before confirming identification to the Police.)
2. Minimum of three verbal referee checks (*sample found in SafeHere system under 'Resources / Team Leader'*)
 - Including at least one from an applicant's previous ministry (if any).
 - If church attendance is less than six months, a referee check from the leader of their previous church is required.
3. A completed Volunteer Application Form (*found on the SafeHere system under 'Resources / Team Leader'*).
4. An interview.
5. For those working more than 10 hours a week with children under 17 and without the presence of caregivers, a written post-interview evaluation assessing suitability for children's ministry based on character, skill and safe practise, including their employment history for the preceding 5 years.
6. NZ Police Vetting. The procedure for police vetting applications is set out below.
7. International Police Certificate if the applicant does not hold New Zealand residency.

Safety Check for Licensed Clergy and Paid Staff

1. Identity verification. (This will happen when the applicant applies for a police check. The Bishop, Executive Secretary or Vicar/Priest in Charge must see at least two pieces of identification, one of which is photographic identification, before confirming identification to the Police.)
2. Minimum of four verbal referee checks, including one from their previous ministry.
3. An interview.
4. For those working more than 10 hours a week with children under 17 and without parents being present, a written post-interview evaluation assessing suitability for children's ministry based on character, skill and safe practise, including their employment history for the preceding 5 years..
5. NZ Police Vetting.
6. International Police Certificate if they do not hold New Zealand residency.
7. Negotiated appointment agreement for licensed clergy or employment agreement for others.
8. For licensed clergy and diocesan 'Enabler' staff, a psychological assessment arranged by the Diocese. Ongoing supervision is also required.

Renewing the Safety Check

All safety checks are to be renewed every three years. The requirement to re-check runs from the date the last safety check was completed.

Renewing a safety check involves:

- Confirming any changes to officially recorded name.
- A fresh NZ Police vet.
- A fresh interview.
- For licensed clergy and others (paid or unpaid) working more than 10 hours a week with children under 17 and without the presence of caregivers, a written post-interview evaluation assessing suitability for children's ministry based on character, skill and safe practise, including their employment history for the preceding 5 years..

We also recommend re-checking previous personnel if there has been a significant period of absence.

NZ Police Vet Requirements

1. A police vet is required every three years for any person (paid or unpaid, clergy or lay) who undertakes ministry with children, young people or vulnerable adults, and for those who in the course of their paid employment with the church may have to deal with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
2. While not required, we also recommend obtaining a police vet for Wardens and Treasurers.
3. All applications must include a signed "Vetting Service Request and Consent Form" (available on the diocesan website and in the SafeHere 'Resources' section) which is sent to the Diocesan Executive Secretary. If the Executive Secretary confirms that a satisfactory police vet has been carried out *in this Diocese* in the past three years a police vet may not be required, although a Vicar/Priest in Charge or Bishop may, for any good reason, require a police vet even if one has been carried out in the previous three years.
4. Where a person has not lived continuously in the Diocese for the previous three years, a police vet must be carried out, except where the applicant has lived in an overseas jurisdiction/s where obtaining a police check is difficult or impossible. In that case, at the Bishop's discretion, alternative information about the character and conduct of the applicant may be sought.
5. A completed Vetting Service Request and Consent Form should be provided as early in the appointment process as possible to allow time for processing by the Vetting Service.

6. The Diocese is the Vetting Service Approved Agency and the Vicar/Priest in Charge of each parish or mission unit is the Approved Agency Authorised Representative for purposes of confirming identity. In the absence of the Vicar/Priest in Charge, the Executive Secretary must confirm identity.
7. On receiving the results of a police vet, the Executive Secretary will advise the Vicar/Priest in Charge or Bishop if there are any potential obstacles to the appointment proceeding. If the vet raises questions, the Executive Secretary will assess whether the disclosed information is relevant to the position being sought and will discuss this with the Vicar/Priest in Charge or Bishop. Any necessary conditions placed on ministry will be advised by the Executive Secretary, who will keep a record of his/her advice
8. The Executive Secretary will not disclose details of the vet to any staff other than the Vicar/Priest in Charge or Bishop, who will advise the subject of the vet.
9. Where a licence from the Bishop is being renewed or a change in position requires a Bishop's licence to be granted, the Bishop has discretion to decide whether to require a police vet where a satisfactory vet has been completed at the request of the Diocese in the previous three years and the applicant has lived continuously in the Diocese since their last vet, but must require a police vet if more than three years has elapsed since the previous police vet or the applicant has not lived continuously in the Diocese since their last police vet.

C. Safety Training Policy

SafeHere training

In addition to undertaking the safety checks above, the Diocese requires those over the age of 16 who undertake ministry with children, young people or vulnerable adults (paid or unpaid, clergy or lay) to undergo SafeHere training appropriate to their role and level of responsibility. This is an additional component of ensuring they are safe to undertake ministry.

SafeHere training for volunteers and paid ministry staff must be completed before, or as soon as practicable after, but not later than 6 months after, their appointment to a ministry role. Those who have not received the required training 6 months after their appointment to a ministry role will be required by their Vicar to **stand-down** from their role until training is complete. They will be informed by the Health & Safety Coordinator before this 6-month deadline that their training is overdue and will be reminded of the obligation to complete SafeHere training.

SafeHere training is not required for those who do not work directly in ministry, even though in the course of their work they may from time to time have to deal with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Nor is it required for office holders who are not otherwise involved in ministry. It is sufficient that such people undertake any required safety checks prior to their appointment or employment. However, although not required, the parish may agree to undertake SafeHere training for additional church workers. Those interested should discuss this with their parish SafeHere Coordinator.

Baseline training

Team Members training

Everyone who regularly assists in ministry must complete:

- SafeHere Module M1: Keeping People Safe, and
- SafeHere Module M2: Child Protection.

(The diocesan training videos for this training are also labelled Modules 1 and 2.)

Team Leaders training

In addition to the above training, Team Leaders and parish SafeHere Co-ordinators (including Vicars and Priests in Charge who automatically become SafeHere Co-ordinators) must also complete:

- SafeHere Module L1: The ChildSafe Team Leader
- SafeHere Module L2: Safety Management Principles & Permission to Proceed.

(There is one diocesan training video for this training which is labelled Module 3 –this covers material relevant to both L1 and L2.)

SafeHere Co-ordinators

In addition to completing Team Members training and Team Leaders training, SafeHere Co-ordinators (including Vicars and Priests in Charge who automatically become SafeHere Co-ordinators) must also complete:

- SafeHere Module C1: The ChildSafe Coordinator

(There is no diocesan training video for this Module. The training is covered online and in the Coordinator's Handbook.)

Event Planners

SafeHere Module L2 Safety Management Principles and Permission to Proceed is highly encouraged for any person responsible for planning one-off church events or activities (eg, church fairs, working bees, picnics, etc.)

Additional training for licensed clergy and licensed lay ministers

In addition to the required SafeHere training, all who hold a ministry licence from the Bishop (clergy and lay) also have to complete other safety training as part of their licensing conditions, eg. update boundaries training (see Diocesan Educator for more information).

First Aid

At least one team member who is onsite must have a current First Aid Certificate and immediate access to a first aid kit, mobile phone and relevant telephone numbers (eg. emergency services, nearest medical centre and emergency contact numbers for all participants).

SafeHere training updates

Every person under SafeHere must undertake update training every three years. This involves resitting the required SafeHere assessments. Usually this will include re-watching the relevant videos, reviewing the online training material or booklet, and resitting the online test.

Those who have not received the required update training within 6 months after the 3-year period has ended will be required by their Vicar (or the Bishop in the case of clergy) to stand-down from their role until training is complete. They will be informed by the Health & Safety Coordinator before the 6-month deadline that their update training is overdue and will be reminded of the obligation to complete it.

D. Dealing with abuse and other misconduct disclosures

The Diocese takes seriously its obligation to provide appropriate standards of ministry – to be a safe place for everyone. The core purpose of adopting the SafeHere programme and other safety measures is to ensure that those involved in ministry are safe people to do so and that ministry is carried out in a safe way.

Any misconduct, and especially suspected abuse, must be taken seriously and handled in a way that ensures the safety of the person who is subject to the suspected misconduct and does not jeopardise any future legal action against the offender.

Only a minority of children actively disclose abuse. Most child abuse is disclosed accidentally or through observation by an adult of the child's behaviour, words and physical appearance. Vulnerable adults may also be reluctant to disclose abuse, especially where it is sexual in nature or may have arisen at the hands of a family member. When someone does disclose abuse, we must take it very seriously.

We should never deal with issues of abuse or other allegations of misconduct on our own and should always involve the Team Leader and/or SafeHere Coordinator (in this case, the Vicar/Priest in Charge) as soon as possible. The Coordinator is responsible to ensure that correct procedure and reporting is followed.

Suspected misconduct by someone in ministry

Despite our best efforts to ensure safety, we may sometimes suspect or discover that a person involved in ministry has engaged in misconduct, including abuse. This possibility may arise through a complaint/disclosure, or because of suspicions about a person's behaviour.

Dealing with complaints or suspicions of abuse is a specialised task. For this reason the Diocese has a separate policy for handling complaints or suspicions of abuse and other misconduct by those involved in ministry.

All complaints and suspicions of abuse must be brought to the attention of the Vicar/Priest in Charge in their capacity as SafeHere Coordinator. They will ensure that the matter is dealt with properly according to diocesan procedure. If the complaint or suspicion is about the Vicar/Priest in Charge, then the person complaining or the person with whom the complaint was raised should immediately contact the Diocesan Executive Secretary at the Anglican Centre (ph. 035483124) to ensure the matter is dealt with properly. The Diocesan Executive Secretary will also arrange for any suspension from ministry that may be required.

Suspected abuse or neglect by someone not in ministry

Sometimes your engagement in ministry with children, young people or vulnerable adults may lead to suspicions or a disclosure that someone outside ministry has committed abuse or neglect, eg, a caregiver or relative. This must be handled with great sensitivity and referred to those with the specialist skills to handle the suspicion or disclosure.

SafeHere training addresses the definition and identification of abuse and neglect (summarised in Schedule B) and the procedures to follow if abuse or neglect are suspected or disclosed.

As soon as possible fully document the suspicion and/or disclosure, using the person's own words and including as much detail as possible. It is not our role to investigate concerns of abuse or neglect, this is the role of specialist police or Oranga Tamariki. Our obligation is to ensure we have formed a belief on reasonable grounds and hold that belief in good faith.

Again, inform the Team Leader and/or SafeHere Coordinator (in this case, the Vicar/Priest in Charge) as soon as you can. The Coordinator is responsible to ensure that correct procedure and reporting is followed.

It is always preferable that the parent/caregiver is involved and/or informed of any concerns where they involve a child, but the SafeHere Co-ordinator's first priority is to ensure the safety of the child and this may require them to immediately contact Oranga Tamariki or the Police if they have concerns about a child's immediate safety. (If the Co-ordinator is unavailable, immediate concerns about safety should be raised by the Team Leader or Team Member).

Where the concern is about an adult and involves possible criminal behaviour, the Co-ordinator will encourage the person concerned to take the matter to the Police and, if needed, will support them to do so. If the vulnerable person is elderly and is hesitant about taking the matter to the Police, it may be helpful to seek advice from Aged Concern.

The Bishop's Chaplain can provide advice on pastoral support that may be needed.

Schedule A: SafeHere roles explained

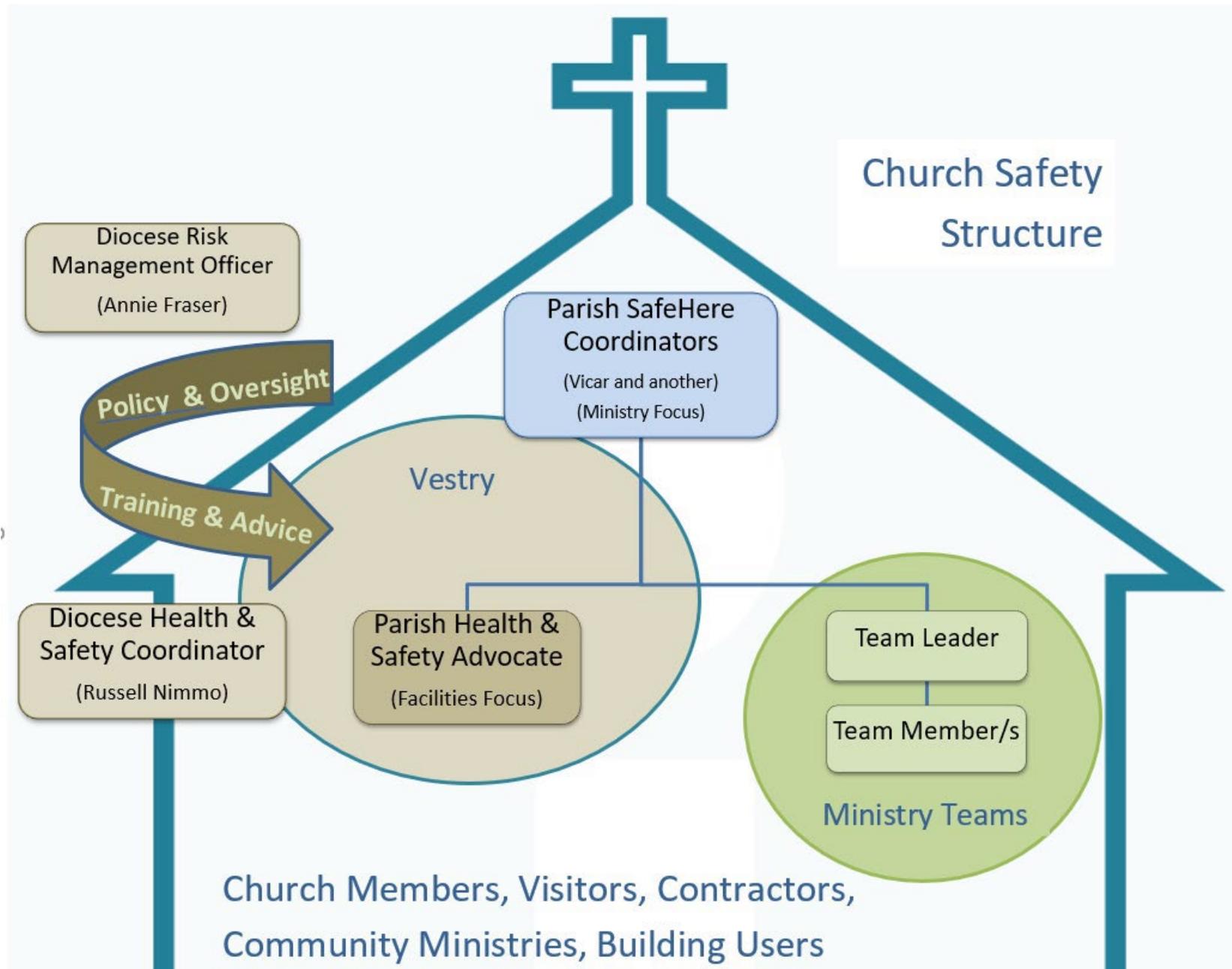
Safety Structure Role Outlines in the Nelson Diocese

| <i>Title</i> | <i>Role</i> | <i>Appointment Process</i> | <i>Training Requirement</i> | <i>Specific Safety Duties</i> |
|--------------------|---|---|--|---|
| <i>Team Member</i> | <p>A member of a ministry team that works with vulnerable people. (Child/Youth/Adult)</p> <p>Assists the Team Leader to plan and deliver a safe programme.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application • 3* Referees • Interview • Police Vet <p>Appointment to a job description by Vicar in consultation with Team Leader</p> <p>(*Paid staff require 4 referee checks)</p> | <p>Must complete SafeHere Modules M1 and M2 for Team Members</p> | <p>Committed to the SafeHere Standards for Team Members (Pocket Guide)</p> <p>Accountable to the SafeHere Team Leader.</p> |
| <i>Team Leader</i> | <p>The leader of a ministry team is responsible for safety of the programmes & activities they oversee.</p> | <p>(As above)</p> | <p>SafeHere modules M1 & M2</p> <p>Plus the Team Leader Modules. (L1 and L2)</p> | <p>Accountable to the SafeHere Coordinator for planning & executing a safe programme.</p> <p>Undertakes risk assessments for all programmes and activities and applies to the SafeHere Coordinator for permission to proceed with programme and activities.</p> |
| <i>Coordinator</i> | <p>Coordinates the Parish SafeHere system for safe ministry.</p> <p>Oversees Team Member appointments.</p> <p>Maintains the Safety Management online database</p> | <p>The Vicar is a SafeHere Coordinator by default. (They must also complete the SafeHere Training modules)</p> <p>It is recommended that parishes have an additional lay SafeHere coordinator so support the Vicar in this large role.</p> | <p>Above Modules (M1, M2, L1, L2)</p> <p>Plus C1 Coordinator Training</p> | <p>Responsible for helping the Team Leaders to learn & follow the SafeHere system in the planning & conduct of their programme</p> <p>Delivers SafeHere Training at all levels.</p> <p>Submits Police Vets & ensures that Team member training and Police Vets are up to date.</p> <p>Approves/signs "Permission to Proceed" forms.</p> |

Schedule A: SafeHere roles explained

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|--|--|---------------------|---|--|
| | | | | <p>Receives “Critical Incident” reports and complaints and assists in critical incidents as appropriate.</p> <p>Ensures Parish has a Health & Safety Advocate and that all Vestry members understand their Health & Safety obligations.</p> |
| <i>Parish Safety Advocate</i> | Oversees the vestry efforts to ensure that the Vestry fulfill their Health & Safety responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015. | Vestry Appointment | SafeHere Module M2 on Risk Management is recommended. | Focus is on safe facilities and events, while the SafeHere Coordinator focuses on safe people and programmes. |
| <i>Diocese Risk Management Officer</i> | Oversees the risk management process for the whole diocese in conjunction with the Diocese Health & Safety Coordinator | Diocese Appointment | M1, M2, L1, L2, C1 and RMO training | <p>In conjunction with the Standards and Safety Committee, develops policy & procedures around Health & Safety.</p> <p>Approves/signs off safety plans for Diocese events as required.</p> <p>Receives and investigates complaints.</p> <p>Oversees critical incidents</p> |
| <i>Diocese Health & Safety Coordinator</i> | Trains and supports SafeHere Coordinators to fulfil their duties under SafeHere. | Diocese Appointment | M1, M2, L1, L2, C1 and RMO training | <p>SafeHere Coordinator training and support.</p> <p>Supports Parish Safety Advocates and vestry with safety guidance as required.</p> <p>Advises and assists in critical incident, as appropriate, and may act as a Risk Management Officer.</p> <p>Approves/signs off safety plans for Diocese events as required. (Permission to proceed)</p> |

Schedule A: SafeHere roles explained



Schedule B: Defining and Identifying Abuse and Neglect

Abuse is defined in legislation as "...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person". Although there is no specific definition in legislation for abuse of vulnerable adults, the same would apply.

Abuse and neglect may take several forms:

- **Psychological abuse** (also known as Emotional Abuse) is ongoing emotional maltreatment or emotional neglect, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on emotional development. It can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, exploiting, terrorising or any other treatment that may diminish the sense of identity, dignity and self-worth. It may also include age or inappropriate expectations being imposed. It also includes seeing or hearing the ill treatment of others. Such abuse is often associated with situations of power imbalance, such as abusive relationships and bullying.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a dependant's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the person's health or development. It may involve such things as a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, failing to provide adequate supervision, or ensuring access to appropriate medical care and treatment.
- **Physical abuse** is a situation in which a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by another. It can be caused from such things as punching, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, burning or throwing. It can also result from excessive or inappropriate discipline or violence within the family and is considered abuse whether or not it was intended to hurt the person. It may result from a single episode or a series of episodes.
- **Sexual abuse** is a term that describes sexual activity where one (or more) of the people involved does not, or cannot, give consent. Both adults and children can be sexually abused. Sexual abuse of a child is when someone uses their power or authority to involve the child in sexual activity, including touching for sexual purposes, fondling of breasts, buttocks or genitals, oral sex, sexual intercourse, exposing themselves to a child, or seeking to have the child touch them for a sexual purpose. It also includes voyeurism, photographing children inappropriately, involving a child with pornographic activities or prostitution or using the internet and phone to initiate sexual conversations with children. An adult, adolescent or a child with greater power may perpetrate sexual abuse. While it may involve a stranger, most sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child knows and trusts.

Identifying Abuse and Neglect

It is not always easy to recognise that someone is being hurt or is at risk, so abuse can often go undetected. There are indicators (signs, symptoms, clues) that when found, either on their own or in various combinations, can point to possible abuse, neglect or family violence.

Indicators can be:

- Physical – such as bruises or burns and relate to someone's physical condition.
- Behavioural – such as someone cringing or flinching if touched unexpectedly, or a caregiver constantly calling a child 'stupid' or 'dumb'. Behavioural indicators can be displayed by the vulnerable person or by the alleged abuser.

Indicators do not always prove that someone has been harmed. They alert us that abuse may have occurred and that a person may need help or protection.

Sometimes indicators can result from life events that do not involve abuse, such as divorce, accidental injury, etc.