

**THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF BUNBURY
SAFE CHURCH**

**POLICY: STANDARDS FOR SAFE MONITORING AND SUPPORT GROUPS
IN A PARISH**

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARISH MONITORING GROUPS AND
WARDENS**

Approved: BIC 19Nov20

A Parish can be one of the few places where sex offenders and persons of concern can attend and be present in a community as recipients of God's forgiveness. However, such forgiveness does not mean the individual will automatically receive immunity from temptation to reoffend, nor the removal of barriers to temptation and full inclusion in Parish life.

The forgiveness and grace of God, together with monitoring, supervision, clear guidelines and boundary setting by the parish and the Diocese are reviewed regularly. This includes when circumstances change or when the Monitoring Group membership changes and these are a vital part of the inclusion process and acceptance into the worshipping community. These indicate ongoing vigilance and commitment to keeping everyone safe.

Forgiveness does not mean forgetting what the offender has done but it provides a means to encourage the offender to take responsibility for the harm done for the rest of the offender's life; and, where ever possible, make amends.

The Support People in the Parish must understand and accept all decisions concerning known sex-offenders and persons of concern are based on Child Centred practices. Support People in the Parish should:

1. Have completed a Safe Church Training Program which should be kept up to date as required
2. Have completed and provided the appropriate Safe Ministry Check form
3. Be engaged and aware of their responsibilities
4. Provide monitoring and support on a weekly basis
5. Be aware of the meaning of manipulation and grooming and be alert to prevent their own collusion and victimisation in such practices by the offender (offenders often lie and minimise their offences)
6. Be able to differentiate between forgiveness and trust
7. Ensure the Offender is accountable for their obligations under the Worshipping Agreement and there are strategies and agreed actions to be taken immediately if the Worshipping Agreement is breached
8. Be objective and non-judgemental
9. Focus on providing a place of healing and restoration for the victim and their family; and for the offender
10. Provide reassurance and protection to the offender when others within the Parish act adversely towards them or their family
11. Be aware of the offender's Parole or Reporting conditions
12. Be aware of any Rehabilitation programs undertaken while in prison
13. Be prepared to sit with the offender and escort them to the bathroom if required
14. Communicate with others in the support network to ensure someone from the group is always in attendance
15. Be able to respond appropriately to inconsistent behaviours (i.e. Mental Health Issues / Medication)

16. Have resources at hand for the resolution of any issues arising
17. Have the ability to make an ongoing commitment to the support network;
18. Report any concerning behaviours to the Parish Priest or Director of Professional Standards and the Diocesan Safe Ministry Chairperson
19. Not engage in social activities with the offender
20. Not invite the individual to functions where there will be children present external to the parish
21. Be alert to invitations from other parishes where children may be present and ensure these are not accepted
22. Advise the Director of Professional Standards if you will be absent from the Parish so other monitoring arrangements can be made.

Section 557K - Criminal Code – Sex Offenders

Consorting

(4) A person who is a child sex offender and who, having been warned by a police officer —

(a) that another person is also a child sex offender; and

(b) that consorting with the other person may lead to the person being charged with an offence under this section, habitually consorts with the other person is guilty of an offence and is liable to imprisonment for 2 years and a fine of \$24 000.

Lawful Reason to be where there are Children

(6) A child sex offender who, without reasonable excuse, is in or near a place that is —

(a) a school, kindergarten or child care centre; or

(b) a public place where children are regularly present,

and where children are at the time is guilty of an offence and is liable to imprisonment for 2 years and a fine of \$24 000.

Grooming

Grooming refers to the process by which sex offenders groom people in the community, such as parents, carers, teachers and children to engage, establish trust and gain access to a child. Sex offenders spend considerable time targeting, enticing and trapping a child for sexual purposes.

There are several specific techniques offenders use to mask their behaviour prior to the abuse as well as during and after the abuse occurs. Many deliberately establish themselves as the kind of person you wouldn't suspect to be a sex offender because they are "too nice" or an upstanding person in the community who readily helps out. This is a powerful tactic as it allows offenders to become embedded in a community and be involved in a number of socially responsible activities such as youth groups, churches and schools, which can give the offender access to a number of potential victims without ever being suspected.

This double life causes parents and others to drop their guards and allow access to their children without suspecting anything. It is important to also note the majority of offenders are known to the family, and too often are family members. Offenders use gifts and deceit to manipulate and silence the child into keeping the sexual abuse a secret.

The second tactic is the ability to charm, to be likeable, to radiate sincerity and integrity. This is crucial in gaining access to children, and the power of this tactic should not be underestimated. Some offenders will attempt to establish peer relationships with people much younger than themselves, as they prefer the company of children to adults, rather than looking for age-appropriate relationships.

If the abuse is not stopped, the behaviour progresses to increasingly intimate acts.

Some examples of grooming behaviour can include:

- Befriending and gaining the trust of children and their families
- Regularly offering to babysit a child for or take a child on overnight outings alone
- Taking a child to the cinema
- Actively excluding a child from other adults or children
- Targeting vulnerable, unhappy or needy children – i.e. Children who are more likely to respond to attention and gifts
- Giving sweets, gifts or money to a child
- Seeking out a 'favourite' in a class or group of children
- Giving excessive praise and compliments to a child
- Sexualising conversations and telling inappropriate jokes
- Insisting on physical affection such as kissing, hugging, wrestling, stroking the hair or tickling even when the child clearly does not want it
- Watching children undress or taking showers
- Being overly interested in the sexual development of a child
- Insisting on time alone with the child with no interruption
- Photographing children
- Exposing their genitals to a child.

Grooming behaviours do not generally meet the threshold of Mandatory Reporting. If anyone has any concerns or believe that a child may be at risk, it must be reported to the Director of Professional Standards.