

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF BUNBURY

POLICY: SELECTION AND ACCREDITATION OF LAY PARISH CHURCH WORKERS

14th December 2018

POLICY

The Diocese of Bunbury requires the selection of lay parish church workers including volunteers to be undertaken in a manner consistent with the Safe Church principles and practices of the Diocese, including the exercise of reasonable duty of care in the processes. Particular attention is paid to lay Parish Church Workers working with children, young people and vulnerable persons.

PRACTICES

It is important to note the three phases in ensuring the selection and accreditation of lay parish church workers is done appropriately and with due care and attention.

1. Implementation of a Selection Process
2. Steps Prior to Appointment
3. Steps After Appointment
4. Storage of Records

1. Implementation of a Selection Process

Please refer to The Parochial Statute 2017-2018 and the description of the Oversight Committee in each parish; its membership and terms of reference. Each Oversight Committee is responsible for ensuring the selection, appointment and support of lay church workers is following appropriately.

This Oversight Committee is a sub-committee of the Parish Council and consequently, Parish Council is responsible for ensuring the Committee's work is appropriate, supported, understood and shared with the wider parish. Members of Parish Council are expected to keep themselves up to date and engaged with the work of the Oversight Committee.

Those involved should be familiar with the implementation of the Selection Process and:

- Lead by having been through the process themselves
- Take time and do not rush the process in a perfunctory or bureaucratic manner
- Respond to and not ignore anxieties and resistance
- Are careful to identify all high risk positions
- Are willing to make the hard decisions in the assessment of applicants
- Acknowledge the different communication styles, teaching and learning styles and personalities to ensure differences in personality do not become the issue in the selection process; and, that genuine risk factors are considered.

2. Steps Prior to Appointment

i) Identification of ministry positions

A list of all ministry positions in the parish (both paid church workers and volunteers) should be compiled.

ii) Ministry Position Descriptions

A ministry description for each position should be prepared. This description should identify all parts of the duties, responsibilities and expectations of the ministry position. The Diocese has a number of model position descriptions. Please contact the Diocese if help is required.

iii) Assessment of risk of potential harm when making an appointment

Assessment of risk of potential harm for each ministry position involves consideration of three aspects:

- The risk that harm could be committed by abuse and child abuse as defined in Faithfulness in Service;
- The power, authority and control of those who minister
- The level of vulnerability of those being administered to.

Risk of potential harm can be assessed according to the following scale:

- **Low Risk Ministries:** Ministry duties and responsibilities that do not permit a person to be alone with a child or vulnerable adult, or do not permit access to financial resources or sensitive and confidential information. Such ministries do not require a significant level of authority and trust.
- **High Risk Ministries:** Ministry duties and responsibilities that permit opportunities for a person to be alone with a child or vulnerable adult or permit access to financial resources, or sensitive confidential information. These ministries are positions of actual or perceived authority or the positions that allows a person to establish long-term relationships of trust. All residential or off-site ministries with children or vulnerable adults are always ranked high risk.

The following questions should be considered to determine the appropriate risk category:

- Does the position permit a person to be alone with a child or vulnerable adult?
- Does the position permit a person to have access to financial resources or sensitive and confidential information?
- What is the level of authority or trust of the position?
- What is the actual or perceived authority of the position?

Where there are questions about this process or the subsequent risk assessment, please contact the Diocesan Secretary.

Individuals who hold more than one position within a parish are to be selected in a manner consistent with the position that holds the highest level of risk and has the most stringent screening requirements.

In the Diocese of Bunbury, our Safe Church compliance requirements are clear there are specific positions that cannot be held and a person cannot be elected or

appointed unless they have undergone Safe Church training before appointment and all their paperwork is compliant and up to date. A full description of this is in the Parish Handbook and is available on the website under Safe Church' and the Parish Handbook.

A complete set of requirements for the most stringent screening includes:

- Police Clearance
- Volunteers' Check
- Safe Church Training
- Working With Children Check
- Safe Ministry For Children Forms and Referee Checks for specific positions

iv) Safe Ministry Training

All high risk ministry training positions should satisfactorily complete Diocesan Safe Ministry training, prior to selection.

Currently this training must be repeated every three years at a minimum. This is subject to review and may be changed.

v) Application Form

Each person applying or approached for an appointment to a ministry position should be given a copy of the ministry description and complete and application form. For paid church workers, suitable application forms are now included on the Website: Safe Ministry To Children Forms and for Referees.

Similarly, the forms are now available for completion for positions for a voluntary church worker with a high risk position.

vi) Interview

Each applicant for and current church worker in a high risk ministry position should be interviewed. It is desirable that a person seeking appointment to a high risk ministry position should be interviewed by a panel of persons (two or three persons with a gender balance).

vii) Referees

It is important referees are contacted before a person is selected or appointed to a high risk ministry position. The information provided by referees must be recorded. See the Website: www.bunburyanglican.org Form for use by Referees.

viii) Working With Children Check or Declaration or Criminal History Check

The Diocese of Bunbury complies with the Western Australian requirements for Working with Children, through the WWCC. This applies to ALL Clergy (Priests, Deacons, those with PTO licences) and to Licensed Lay Ministers.

In addition, this Diocese also requires a current Volunteers Police Clearance Certificate which the Diocese will apply for on behalf of the volunteer applicant, and for all Clergy Persons (Priests, Deacons, PTO Licensed Clergy) whether stipended

or not, a satisfactory National Police Clearance Certificate is required which such applicants must apply for directly for themselves and provide to the Diocese.

The Director of Professional Standards is consulted before any appointment to a high risk ministry position of any person in the Diocese, and an assessment made as to any convictions, offences, or reports that may have been made, prior to any appointment being made. Please contact the Diocesan Secretary for your parish positions, as the National Register needs to be checked before taking this step.

ix) Assessment

If any information is obtained, such as a 'Yes' answer in the Safe Ministry Check or to an interview questions, or a referee's comments as to whether the applicant might constitute a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults, then advice must be obtained from the Director of Professional Standards. Please contact the Diocesan Secretary to facilitate this process.

This Diocese recommends strongly to parishes, that no-one is appointed to a position of leadership before they have been regularly attending in the parish for a minimum of 12 months. If an appointment is refused, then the Director of Professional Standards must also be notified and the Diocesan Secretary.

x) Accreditation

Only applicants who have completed the selection process and been found suitable for appointment to a high risk ministry position should be accredited as being suitable for the appointment. The accreditation or confirmation process should include the person or body making the appointment completing, assigning and dating the selection process list for high risk ministry positions.

3. Steps After Appointment

The selection process does not stop after a person is appointed to a ministry position. Ongoing training and supervision are required.

i) Orientation and Training

Orientation to a ministry position and, where appropriate, training on a continuing basis should be made available to church workers. It should be remembered that training will encourage church workers that the parish values them and considers their ministry important.

ii) Supervision and Evaluation

It is important that all church workers who are appointed to a ministry position are appropriately supervised. It is not always necessary that the person who appointed provides the supervision.

Performance of the ministry undertaken by church workers in high risk ministry positions should be evaluated from time to time. Regular positive feedback will be an encouragement to church workers. Sensitive feedback suggesting areas and strategies for improvement will assist church workers to develop their ministry skills.

iii) Struggling church workers and unsuccessful applicants

Particular care should be provided to church workers who may be struggling in their ministry positions or applicants who were unsuccessful in the selection process.

iv) Re-accreditation

The selection and accreditation process should be repeated for persons in high risk ministry positions at three year intervals. Remember events may have occurred in a person's life over the previous three years, which are unknown to anyone in the parish, which may make the person unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.

v) Change in Ministry Positions

It is not necessary to repeat the selection and accreditation process for persons who change from a high risk ministry position to another high risk ministry position, or from a high risk ministry position to a low risk ministry position within three years after accreditation.

However, whenever a person changes from a low risk ministry position to a high risk ministry position, then the selection and accreditation process will need to be undertaken unless it has been already undertaken within the previous three years.

4. Storage of Records

All selection documents, including those relating to persons who are unsuccessful in their applications for a high risk ministry position, are kept indefinitely in a secure location. As documents obtained in the selection process contain personal information, access should and must be restricted only to those who are authorised to see them.

Please view the *Diocese of Bunbury's Privacy Policy* on the Website for further assistance.