

Holy Ascension Orthodox Church Child Safety Contact Person Position Description

Introduction

The purpose of this *Child Safety Contact Person Position Description* is to clearly define the role and responsibilities of a Child Safety Contact Person. It should be read in conjunction with the parish *Child Safe Policy and Statement of Commitment to Child Safety*.

Definitions

Key terms in this Child Safe Code of Conduct are defined in the parish *Child Safe Policy and Statement of Commitment to Child Safety*.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Our clergy and Parish Committee are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children.

For the children who belong to or visit our parish, we will provide a child safe environment. This means that we will act to ensure that children feel safe, are safe, and can participate appropriately, actively, and confidently in the divine services and in the broader life of our parish.

We have zero tolerance for any form of harm to or abuse of children. This includes emotional abuse, neglect, physical abuse, and sexual abuse.

Our parish is multi-cultural and brings together families and individuals of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and needs. We value both our unity and our diversity and are committed to words and actions that make this clear to our children and the children who visit us.

We have publicly available policies and procedures in place to support these commitments, and we will provide our clergy, office-bearers, and volunteers with the necessary information, training, and other resources to ensure that they are met.

We take allegations and safety concerns seriously and will deal with them promptly and respectfully. They will be handled in accordance with our policies and procedures and, whenever necessary, Victorian, and other applicable Australian law.

We will engage sensitively with survivors of abuse and actively seek their input into our policies, procedures, and training.

All who belong to or visit our parish will be advised of our commitment to child safety and of their role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children while here.

Children's Participation

Our Orthodox Christian tradition is rich and multi-faceted. In the life of our parish, we preserve rites and customs developed over many centuries and in significantly different cultural settings. We value these things, the living expression of our Orthodox Christian Faith, as a precious inheritance that we, in turn, hope to pass to our children and to their children.

To make this possible, we want our children to participate appropriately, actively, and confidently in the divine services and in the broader life of our parish. To this end, we will answer their questions, listen to their views, respect what they say, and provide them with opportunities to learn, read, sing, serve, and help.

Child Safety Contact Persons

Each year the parish rector will appoint two Child Safety Contact Persons. The duties of the Child Safety Contact Persons are set out in this *Child Safety Contact Person Role Description*. Prior to an appointment being made, expressions of interest in the role will be sought from amongst parish members, and the approval of the Parish Committee will be obtained.

The Child Safety Contact Persons will be trusted parish members who have a demonstrated rapport with children and who have been assessed as suitable to work with them. Ideally, one Child Safety Contact Person will be female and the other male.

To the extent possible in a small parish, the rector should ensure that the Child Safety Contact Persons are independent of family or other connections with parish clergy that may raise reasonable concerns as to their independence.

The Parish Committee will ensure that the Child Safety Contact Persons are able to securely store records and that they are provided with all other necessary resources and support to perform their duties.

Responsibilities

It will be the responsibility of the Child Safety Contact persons to:

- Ensure the availability of age-appropriate information at church and on the parish website about child safety in parish life
- Plan simple periodic activities for children, that emphasise their role in parish life, as needed or required.
- Facilitate presentations to the Parish Committee, and to the Annual General Meeting, to help office-bearers and parish members understand child safety in our parish
- Receive and manage complaints in accordance with the parish *Child Safe Complaints Management Policy*
- Review parish compliance with regards to Victorian law and parish policy in relation to child safety, bringing any breaches to the immediate attention of the Parish Committee
- Participate in the work of the Parish Committee, as required.
- Participate in the assessment of suitability of anyone working with children in parish life
- Keep records of their work relevant to Child Safety.
- Ensure that sensitive records are stored securely, and that confidentiality is maintained
- Contribute appropriately and review all parish policies relating to child safety.

In undertaking their educational and compliance monitoring work, the Child Safety Contact Persons will work closely with the parish rector and the Parish Committee.

Note: The work of verifying Working with Children Checks and of receiving notification of barred workers will be undertaken by the Parish Committee.

List of related parish policies and documents

The following parish documents are related to this Policy and Statement:

- Child Safe Policy and Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Child Safety Contact Person position description
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safe discussion points for Parish Committee meetings

The following Diocesan policies are relevant to this Code of Conduct:

- [The Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia: Child Safe Policy](#)
- [The Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia: Code of Conduct](#)

Monitoring and Review

With the assistance of the Child Safety Contact Persons, this Child Safety Contact Person Position Description will be formally reviewed by the Parish Committee after each complaint, and at least every two years. To the extent possible, review of these Discussion Points will take into account comments and suggestions from children; parish clergy, office-bearers, volunteers, and members; the Commission for Children and Young People; the Diocesan authorities; and the parish insurer.

We will particularly endeavour to draw on the experience of survivors of abuse in our own Orthodox Christian community here in Australia. Consideration will also be given to information prepared by organisations advocating for child safety.